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Superintendent: Carl Malone

Muncie Park & Recreation Special Board Meeting (5 Year Plan Draft)

Tuesday, April 1, 2021

City Hall Auditorium

- (1) Call to Order
- (2) Pledge of Allegiance
- (3) Roll Call
- (4) Approval of Mission & Vision Statement from 5 Year Plan Draft Plan
- (5) Opening Statement – Brad Marshall, Parks Board President
- (6) Superintendent Comments – Carl Malone
- (7) Comments – Muncie Parks & Recreation Board → none
- (8) Public Comment – (3) minute limit - Please state your name and address.

Remember to please call the Park Office or the Park Board President (Brad Marshall) if you have an item that needs to be placed on the agenda.

*** Next Park Board Meeting – Tuesday, April 13, 2021 (6:00 p.m.) - City Hall Auditorium**

Muncie Park & Recreation Board Meeting

April 1, 2021 6p.m.

City Hall Auditorium

1. CALL TO ORDER- President Brad Marshall called meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – All stood for the Pledge

3. ROLL CALL-Present was President Brad Marshall, Mark Erving, Shannon Powers. Vice President Adrian Leavell was late.

4. APPROVAL OF Mission & Vision Statement for 5 yr. Plan Draft. – Our mission is to enrich the lives of the recreation facilities and affordable diverse recreation and human service activities for people of all ages to play, learn and to contemplate, build community, and be good stewards of our environment. No questions from the Board on the mission statement.

A vote was taken by all Park Board members present. First Motion was by Mark Ervin. Second by Shannon Powers. Vote was taken and approved by all members present. Motion carried.

5. Opening Statements – Brad Marshall, Parks & Recreation Board President

Brad Marshall stated we are taking in everyone statements and consideration about the 5yr plan. We have had multiple meetings regarding this plan and where it's at today. It is a continued working document and to revise this even further. We have slides to show you this evening regarding our goals and plans.

A few things that have been changed from the plan; The lines in the opening paragraph have been removed regarding the YMCA and Tuhey discussion that is not referenced in the plan.

Updates to the appropriate references to the plan. Details have been regarding the thousand trees in a thousand days we saw that as an important plan.

We have included some additional details about the public input with the meeting attendance and comments and also some of the survey details updated those in the plan.

We made some provisions to the issue of number four regarding Prairie Creek.

6. Superintendent Comments- Carl Malone

He would like to say thank you to everyone involved with getting this 5yr plan draft started. We have really tried to put together the best plan for the community. We looked at the 2009 and the 2014 5yr plans and get some ideas of what to do. There was no 2019 plan done to go by. We also went out to the community and received some comments and got inventory of our parks from our records. Our Mayor has been a big supporter of our city parks. The Mayor has a plan for four of our parks which are Cooley, Halteman, River View, and Thomas park. All of the parks are important. We are working on grants to get help with all of our parks.

One thing we do know is that the inventory of all our parks needs to be replaced. We keep patching things and now we are at the point of needing to replace our playground equipment. It's old.

Our goal is to get to the place where we can replace the old playground equipment and put in new in all the parks. We want to put into effect an good vision team and have the Mayor to support that and move forward with the community input and have a final draft to send to the state and have them approve it. Again thank you to everyone involved with this draft of the 2021 five year plan. No questions from the Board at this time.

7. Comments- Muncie Parks & Recreation Board- Brad stated the Parks Board members and Carl along with others have work long and hard on getting this started. The next meeting will be on April 13, 2021 in advanced to our normal meeting to insure we can plan an get it submitted by the dead line. No comments from the Board at this time.

8. Public Comment- (3) minute limit-Please state your name and address.

Christopher Bilbrey 6505 N. St. Rd. 67. I want to say thank you to the Park Board for the great job that you do and for the steps you have taken in

removing the line about Tuhey and the YMCA in the draft. There has been a lot of confusion. I want it to go on record I plan to do the same at the City meeting. A lot of the confusion has not come from the park board it has come from the administration. It has been a lack of communication. There have been statements made about what the city was looking at, what the YMCA was looking at. The message by the administration was confusion I feel the administration needs to own that. I watched a community update the day after the most recent statement. He said the Mayor and the YMCA had come to an agreement in Feb. about the Tuhey and YMCA . It didn't match the statement on the 18th of March or the 25th of March. In the community update response the Mayor stated he said he had a promise with the YMCA and he needs to honor it. Before he made a promise to the YMCA he made a promise to the City. He needs to honor that more than the other.

Anitra Davis - Muncie City Council. Anitra wants to thank the Board and Carl and the whole staff. They do a wonderful job. She wants to know what the update was about Prairie Creek. Was it about them becoming their own business away from the Parks dept. Brad Marshall stated yes number four stated in referenced to Prairie Creek development. Brad will read issue four as it is in the most updated draft.

Create and updated development plan for Prairie Creek that reflex its potential in the community as a reginal and National attraction. She wanted to know the importance of allowing Prairie Creek to be its own entity for the city.

Anitra stated: that in the past Muncie citizens have had transportation issues and don't go to Prairie Creek as much. If you make it its own entity if would further segregate people from using Prairie Creek. We want to do the opposite. We want to permute it for all citizens. Anitra stated if it benefits the city by being its own entity she understands that as well.

Brad Marshall stated: the city thought we could get more grants if Prairie Creek was its own entity but that is not the case. There is no benefit of them being their own entity. It is important to keep them partnered with the Park dept.

Anitra Davis stated: she wants to encourage other people to get more youth out to Prairie Creek. Hopefully Mitz and the Parks can help with that happening.

Shannon Powers stated: it would be a wonderful thing to make happen with the kids sense we have a new recreation dept.

George Foley with the Parks dept: wanted to respond the Anitra Davis issue with Prairie Creek and transportation. Last year during the summer program we were able to send one hundred youth to Prairie Creek. He stated that a lot of the kids had never been out to the reservoir. They were out there to work but had down time to play basketball during their lunch break. We want to have more projects for the kids at the reservoir this coming summer. This year we will have two hundred kids in our summer program. We are working with Mitz bus and they will be picking the kids up and transporting them back and forth to their job sites.

Ro Selvey city council stated: She agreed with Anitra Davis about getting the kids out to Prairie Creek more. She stated that it needs to happen more often than just for events with kids. Transportation needs to be constant so when family's wanted to go to Prairie Creek they don't need an event to do it.

Ro came to speak on a skate board park for the kids in the five year plan. I read it and there is no mention of having a skate board park in the five year plan. It is important to me to have one. I would like to see something in the five year plan about a skate Board Park. It's hard to get funding for it if there is no mention of it ever happening.

Brad Marshall stated: He did get the plan a week ago and gave it to the board members a week ago and we have that on the agenda for the April meeting. Also Carl stated that the Mayor has had discussion about the skate board Park at Westside Park. There has been mention of one. They need to present a proposal for it in the next Park meeting. Carl stated he would also like to see more youth going to Prairie Creek and seeing the bike trails and the water and other things Prairie Creek has to offer. Carl would like to have family day.

Todd Swackhamer 6510 N. Morrison rd. Muncie.

He represents the Muncie Skate Board. We have met with Carl and the Mayor and have had great support. The study's we have done Westside Park would be the best park to have a skate board park. Brad stated we have it on the next Board meeting agenda. Shannon Powers is impressed with the proposal and also have the Mayors indorsement hold a lot of weight.

Richard Ivy Deputy Mayor speaking 1209 N. Bellaire Ave. Muncie stated:
He wants to thank the Board and Carl and everyone involved in getting the five year plan started. I got to see everyone in action. The Mayor has put me in charge of the Skate Board Park proposal. I am at a point to where I can sit down with everyone and talk about this and get things started if we move forward with this. Shannon Powers wants Mr. Ivy to organize a zoom meeting for this. Mr. Ivy stated he will do that.

Josh Perkins 7808 W. Kennedy Pkwy Muncie stated:

He is speaking on the Skate Board Park. He has done research on this type of park. Seventeen City's in the state of Indiana larger than fifty thousand people do not have a Skate Board Park. Mayor York in New Castle loved it and there talking about expanding. They have one in Prue that is how Mayor Gabriel Greer got elected. It was such a positive impact on the city. Thanks for listening to me.

Heather Williams 637 W. University Muncie stated:

She wants Tuhey reclassified as a Neighborhood Park slash special needs park because it is the only pool in the city. In the survey section where are the results of the survey comments. They were not a part of the plan and they should be. How are you all determining needs and interests for the Parks. The survey didn't ask them for their recreational needs and didn't give a list of existing programs. This list can also show who is being served by these programs. Will there be a list so people can view them in the five year plan. Who is considered stake holders in this plan. The document stated stake holders in this several times but does not identify them. Heather gave a list of her questions to the board.

Seth Rawlings 1206 S. May Ave. Muncie Stated:

He had looked at the five year plan and there is no mention of the Cardinal Green way and White River Greenway. Is there any way you are going to partner with them on any specific things. Bread Marshall stated Cardinal Greenway is a part of our network of trails. We don't have any specific things going on with them at this time. We have identified them as a partner with the trail system at this time. Shannon Powers Stated that different entity's in the city on pg. 31 we have classified Parks into categories for the readers. We don't have any programs for the Greenway at this time with the Parks. He also appreciates Tuhey and YMCA is taken out of the five year plan

Melinda Messineo 3505 N. Park Ln. Muncie

She wants to thank everyone working on the five year plan. They have bench marks and this is how we are reaching our goal. The previous plan had how other parks compared to others. It's a bench mark comparison. When will the final draft of the five year plan be done?

Brad Marshall stated there will be other panaceas that will be included in this draft. All maps all survey data will be included in this as well.

Shannon Powers stated they are following the DNRS form mat and it has changed from six years ago. It is more streamlined. There are things we don't have to have in it. We think we have a good plan. It is simplified and it meets the requirements. In two years we have to have an implementation review to make sure we have addressed our action schedule and how its set up which is on page forty nine.

Carl Malone stated: we do care about everyone's comments. We are a part of the Indian State Parks Association in Noblesville. We are hosting the state conferences here in Muncie at the down town Convention Center. Dates are November the second through the fourth. It is a great opportunity for all organizations to come together with us. They have a lot of information and great ideas. The Board has been instrumental in give me leadership and guidance being the park superintendent.

Remember to please call the Park office or the Park Board President if you have an item placed on the agenda.

*** Next meeting April 13, 6 p.m. City Hall**

Park Board Meeting Public Input Sign In Sheet

Date: 4-1-2021

Name (Please Print)

Address

1. LARRY STANAGE 508 N BRENTWOOD LN
2. Ethan Hirt 113 N Martin St.
3. Grace Belangee 2709 W Beckett Dr
4. George Foley 1232 N. Hodson Ave.
5. Shannon Powers 701 S. Prestwick Ln.
6. Dan Singer 2425 N. Thompson
7. Phyllis Mills 1701 S. Blaine St
8. Anitra Davis Muncie
9. Seth Bowling 1206 S. May Ave
10. Ryan Wicks Muncie
11. Brannon Garrett 2229 S Daly
12. Ashley Bandy-Garrett 2029 S Daly

Park Board Meeting Public Input Sign In Sheet

Date: Apr. 11, 2021

Name (Please Print)

Address

1. Ro Selvey 2501 W. DeHy
2. Todd Swackhamer 6510 N MORRISON RD
3. Rich Iry 1209 N. Bellaire Ave
4. Melinda Messineo 3505 N Lake Lane
5. Kristopher L. Bilbon 6505 N SR 67 Munn
6. Heather Wilkins 637 W. University Ave.
7. Sarah Perkins 7808 W. Kennedy Pkwy
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

**ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended);
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990
(As Amended)**

The Muncie Park+Rec Board (Applicant) has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE

Bred Marshall 4-1-21

APPLICANT PRESIDENT

Bred Marshall

(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE

Phyllis Mills 4-1-21

Phyllis Mills

(Secretary's printed name)

DATE

4-1-21

Dustin—

As President of the Sherman and Marjorie Zeigler Foundation, I am very excited to hear that Mayor Ridenour and his administration are committed to planting trees to help beautify our community through their "1,000 Trees in 1,000 Days" initiative. Tree planting has long been a focus of the Zeigler Foundation and, indeed, was a focus of the Foundation's founders before the Foundation even existed, as Sherman and Marjorie Zeigler, both as individuals and through the work of the foundation they established, helped fund and oversee the planting of over 2,500 trees in our community through the 1980s and 1990s. The Zeigler Foundation would potentially like to be involved in the current efforts the City is putting towards tree plantings, to the extent that we would entertain a grant request wherein the Zeigler Foundation would match dollar for dollar money that the City commits towards this effort.

Having said this, however, if proper planting schedules, species selection and standards, and maintenance procedures are not agreed to and implemented in advance, the chances that planted trees will survive decreases dramatically. Our experience also suggests that, as employees and personnel involved in such matters changes from month to month and year to year, written commitments concerning such issues are the best way to maximize the chances for success. With such commitments in place, the possibility that matching funds would be made available from our foundation for tree planting efforts is very, very high (obviously, I cannot make commitments for the full board at this juncture).

The following are commitments that I feel very strongly should be made by the City.

1. Tree plantings must be done during times that maximize the chances for tree survival. Such plantings cannot be rushed just to "get trees in the ground". We would want to see a commitment that any concerns that the Urban Forester might have about the timing of tree plantings be given priority when making such determinations. For example, plantings should never occur when the chances of a hard freeze immediately subsequent to such plantings are high (e.g., in March), with early fall generally being the optimal time frame.
2. The selection of tree species must take into consideration the suitability of the species for the area to be planted, as well as the need for species diversity. Once again, the Urban Forester has expertise in these areas and their advice should be followed. Relatedly, the number of trees to be planted in a given space must depend on the species selected, as some trees will need to be spaced farther apart than others given their likely spread at maturity. Plantings also need to carefully consider concerns regarding visibility when they are to be made in areas involving automobile traffic.
3. With new plantings, our experience has shown that planting in strips between a street and a sidewalk that is less than 5' in width significantly decreases the possibility that a tree will survive longer than 3 years. It should be noted that much of Muncie's extensive park system can be a place where many trees can likely be planted successfully without such concerns. Too, "to-be-planted" trees smaller than 2" in caliper very often fail over this same time period as

smaller root balls contribute to survivability issues. Variations from these standards of space requirements and caliper size must be undertaken only with the endorsement of the Urban Forester.

4. If the City is going to be hiring contractors for some plantings, it should be required that the contractor provide their planting standards and procedures, as well as their judgment of the quality of stock they are providing, and how they arrived at such a judgement. The Urban Forester must then be given the opportunity to review such plans, procedures and judgements to determine if they are adequate. The contractor's job is to obtain business (and as much and as quickly as possible). The Urban Forester's job is to look out for the interests of the City. He/she must be allowed to fulfill that job.

5. There must be an adequate, written storage plan for trees the City will be receiving prior to their planting. Such a plan must take into account the suitability of the storage site (shade, water, etc.) to safeguard the health of the trees as well as security of the site to prevent theft.

6. Perhaps the most important (and usually the most neglected) commitment that must be made, in writing, is for proper tree maintenance. Watering will usually need to be done at least once a week (more often in dry conditions) for 2 years. Then there is mulching and, in short order, pruning. The specific entities and/or personnel responsible for these activities must be identified in advance, and agreements that such maintenance will take place must be among all parties involved. For example, if the trees are on County property, a written agreement as to the County's responsibilities in this regard needs to be reached by the appropriate parties. Obviously, the same holds for the City. And such maintenance plans need to encompass not just those who will be charged with caring for the health of the trees, themselves, but also those whose work in the area, although not directly related to tree health, may impact such. For example, mowers must be made aware of restrictions against damaging any such plantings. This involves a commitment to proper training and communication among all parties.

7. Finally, it is important that plans be made to notify adjacent property owners, be they individuals (including farmers and homeowners), businesses, and other entities (e.g., Ball State), when plantings are to occur next to their property, even if the plantings are to be in the public right-of-way. Many property owners do not know where the public right-of-way exists, and if a tree is planted in an area they believe to be their property, they may well take it down. Too, plantings may interfere with work they undertake on their property (particularly true with farmers), with ready alternatives being available (but not heretofore considered) that they might suggest that would alleviate such interference. While the logistics of such communication will vary from site to site, there must be a goal of at least attempting such communication with the affected property owners. This will increase buy-in (though never to 100%), which will increase the chances of success for the 1000 Trees project, especially one that stretches over many years. People who could have been adversaries can be turned into advocates.

It is true that following such commitments as those outlined above may impede the speed of tree plantings. But with these commitments in place, the chances for success for the "1000

Trees in 1000 Days" project increases tremendously. And it is such chances for success (for this or any other project) that largely determines where the Sherman and Marjorie Zeigler Foundation agrees to provide funding.

DRAFT 3.0, April 1,
2021

CITY OF MUNCIE

City of Muncie 2021-2025 Parks and Recreation Master Plan



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Acknowledgements

The City of Muncie Dan Ridenour, Mayor

**"...We have a major focus in 2020 and beyond on parks. Parks are a major quality of life." –
2021 State of The City Address, Muncie Mayor Dan Ridenour**

Board Members

Yolanda Carey (2019-2021, Democrat)

Mark Ervin (Term Dates, *Ex Officio*. MCS Board Appointee, 2018 - present)

Adrian Leavell (2021-2023, Republican)

Brad Marshall (2020-2024, Republican)

Dr. Shannon Powers (2021-2023, Democrat)

Principals

Brad Marshall, Board President, Phone: (765) 744-9332, Email: bkmarsha@gmail.com

Carl Malone, Superintendent, Phone: (765) 747-4858 Email: cmalone@cityofmuncie.com

Plan Preparation

This plan was developed by the Muncie Parks & Recreation staff with assistance from Dr. Shannon Powers, Mp2planning, llc, and the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Planning Commission.

Foundational information for this plan was drawn from the 2014-2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan prepared by the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Planning Commission.

Department Staff

George Foley, Recreation Program Coordinator

Dustin Clark, Director of Special Projects

Ashley Wright, Working Foreman, Prairie Creek Park

Kelly McClellan, Urban Forester

Phyllis Mills, Secretary

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Note: This document has been formatted for two-sided printing to reduce paper usage.

1. INTRODUCTION

Muncie has a city-wide parks system managed by the City of Muncie Parks and Recreation Department (MPRD). The nonprofit Trust for Public Land recognizes 50 percent of Muncie residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park (2018).¹ The urban forestry branch of the parks department has been a member of Tree City USA since 1998. The City and its parks department is a member of the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association. The City is recognized as a “Bicycle-Friendly” Community by the League of American Bicyclists.

Parks are a major focus of the current mayoral administration. The overall department budget was increased by 16 percent in 2020. There are four park renovation projects underway or planned in the city. The city has purchased property for a 10-acre nature park and preserve in the southwestern quadrant of the city.

This 2021-25 Parks & Recreation Master Plan builds on the most recent 2014-2019 plan² with an overall intent of positioning the community to improve upon and support active and passive recreation opportunities. It has been developed with consideration for guidelines from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow the parks system and community apply for Land and Water Conservation Funding program grants. Before any recreation plan is adopted and enacted, it is first important to understand the needs of the residents, what recreational opportunities already exist, and what sort of projects are relevant for residents based on age, ability, population, density and the availability of recreational opportunities in neighboring communities. This plan was developed with input and suggestions via active communication from area residents, city officials and other community stakeholders.

Methodology

The foundation for the development of this plan is based on building upon previous planning efforts and staff experience, conducting a community survey, and working with the City, The Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission, and private citizens and, which were initially developed by MPRD staff and a planning committee focused on creating the 2021 plan:

- Involve the community in the process through a community survey and meetings;
- Identify, update, and map existing Muncie recreational facilities;
- Build common ground among Muncie stakeholders in addressing the future recreational needs and priorities of the City; and,

¹ The Trust for Public Land: <https://parkserve.tpl.org/mapping/index.html?CityID=1851876>

² City of Muncie’s 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2014, Muncie Parks Department and Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission, April 2014

- Document all aspects of the efforts following Department of Natural Resources guidelines.

Broadly speaking, Muncie officials intend to use this plan to guide their work on all future recreational and parks projects within the City. It is also a strategic document that articulates specific goals to various agencies and organizations that fund local recreational and parks improvement projects. Specifically, this plan is developed in accordance with the guidelines for *5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plans* published by the INDNR. A five-year, INDNR-approved recreation plan is necessary for the City of Muncie to pursue INDNR-administered grants.

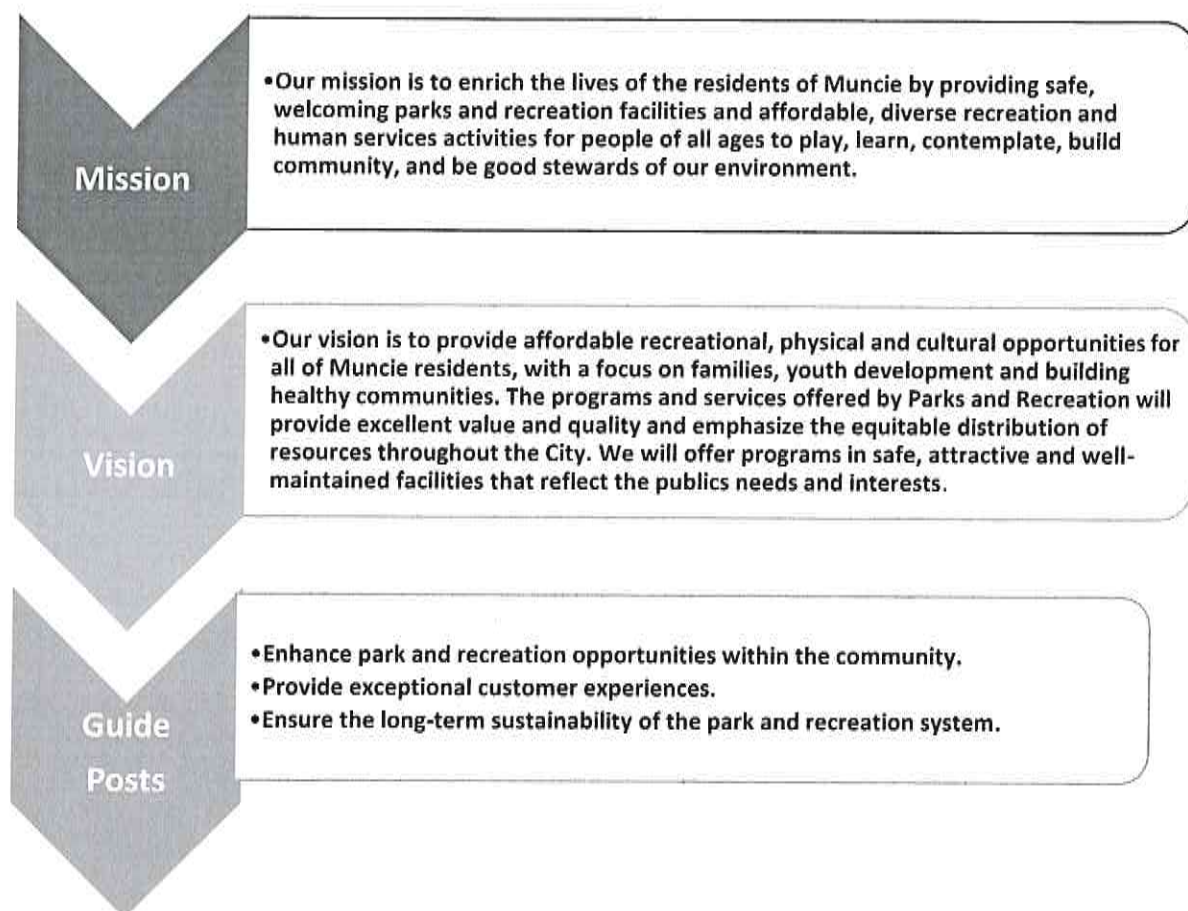


Parks Board/Department Overview

The Muncie Park Board was established in 1909. In the 1930's, the Muncie Community School Corporation and the City of Muncie created a recreation department. In 1948, a full-time recreation director was appointed cooperatively by the school corporation and the city. Further steps were taken in 1958 to consolidate the recreation program, when the Recreation Department merged with the Muncie Park Department, and left the Recreation Board as an advisory body to help in the development of a community-wide recreation program. Due to increased demand for additional recreation programs, the Recreation Department was made a separate unit in 1964 with the recreation director being made primarily responsible to the Muncie School Corporation, while still receiving partial financing from the city.

Vision, Mission, and Guide Posts

The following outlines the foundational framework for the Muncie Parks and Recreation Department:



Parks Organization

The current Muncie Parks & Recreation Department and Board of Parks and Recreation were established in April of 1982. The board is comprised of five members; four members are appointed by the mayor and one member is an ex-officio member appointed by the Muncie School's Board of Trustees. Figure 1 presents the organization.

Figure 1: City of Muncie Parks & Recreation Organization

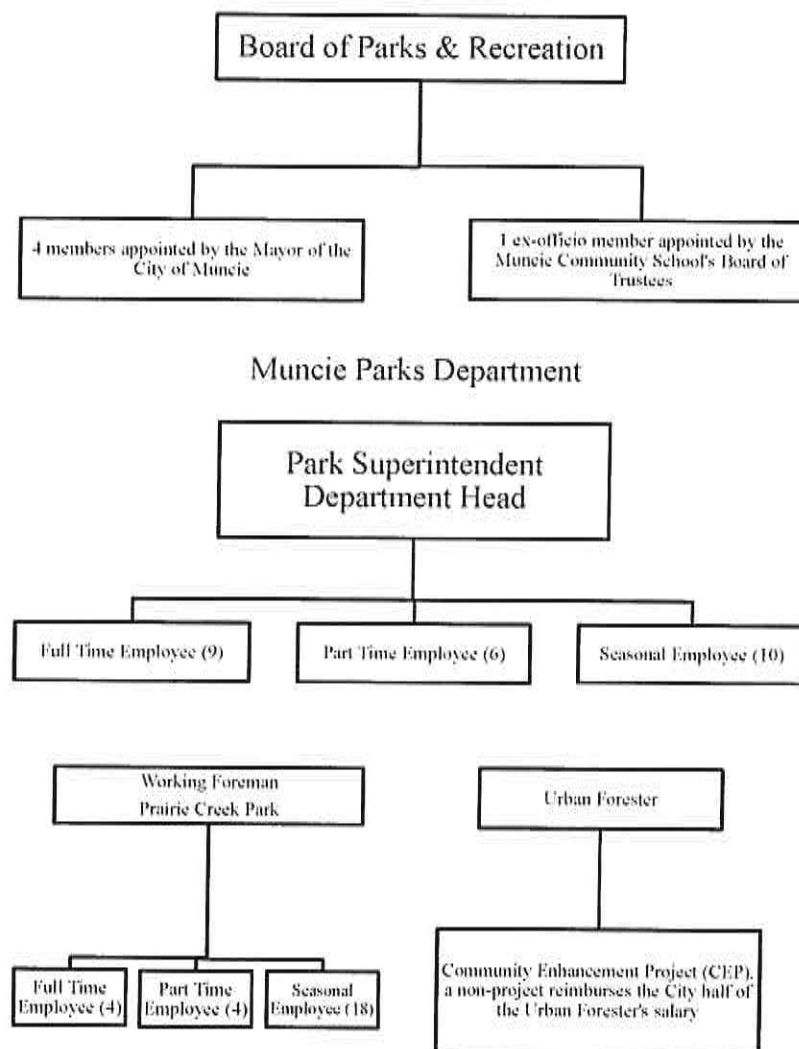


Figure 1 City of Muncie Parks & Recreation Organizational Chart

The Muncie Parks Department has a Superintendent of Parks as the department head and a Working Foreman who is the Superintendent of Prairie Creek Park.

Muncie's Urban Forester was brought into the department; half of this position's salary is supported by Community Enhancement Projects (CEP), a local non-profit organization. She has worked 18.5 years in Urban Forestry and has served the department for 12 years. The Urban Forester supervises up to 2 part-time employees of the department. Prairie Creek Park has an additional full-time employee and also employs a maximum of six part-time/seasonal employees.

Urban Forestry

Muncie's urban forest is a fundamental part of the City's infrastructure, including the park system, contributing to the community's health and aesthetic appeal. Trees are known to increase air and water quality, reduce impacts upon storm water controls, recharge groundwater, stabilize soil and reduce erosion, reduce noise pollution, promote energy efficiency by reducing heat-island effects and providing windbreaks, promote economic development by increasing the value of real estate and providing benefit to the tax base, increase motorized traffic and pedestrian safety, provide wildlife habitat, and increase the mental health of the community's citizens by reducing people's stress and blood pressure.

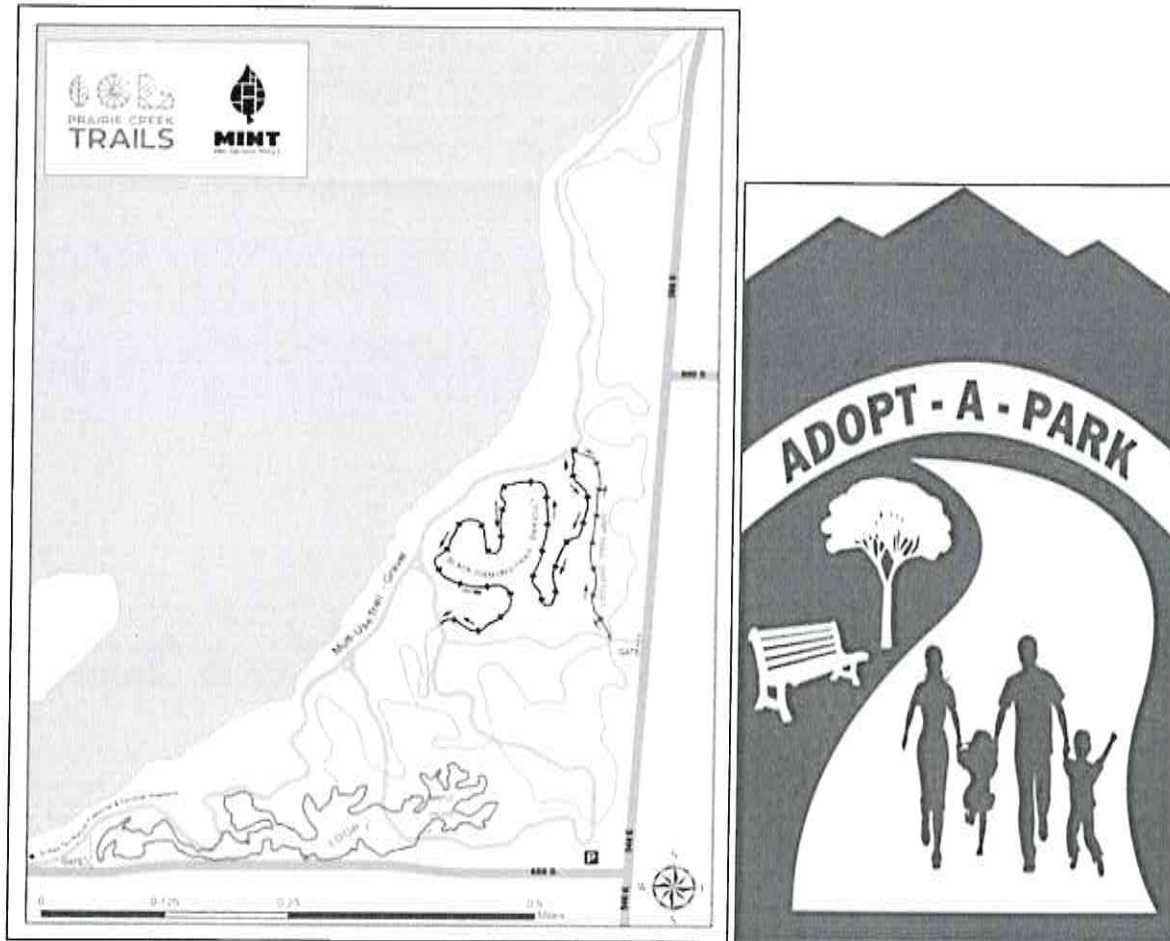
The City of Muncie employs an Urban Forester, a certified arborist, who enforces the city's tree ordinance and cares for all trees located within the right of way and on city property with the help of a few part-time laborers. The Urban Forester has been based in various departments but has been operating from the Park Department for over 12 years. The city has funded and plans to hire five additional certified arborists.

The last Urban Forestry Management Plan was created for the City of Muncie in 2004 and updated in 2005. Funding for a new plan was approved recently. Muncie's street tree inventory is currently 11,000 public trees; this inventory is maintained in the Delaware County G.I.S. and is regularly updated by the Urban Forester. These trees reside along public streets, islands and medians in the middle of streets, in the single public cemetery, one public campground at Prairie Creek Reservoir, and in the parks.

Volunteer Assistance

The parks department partners with many organizations and individuals to enhance the City's parks and recreation offerings. The Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Project Programs match groups and organizations with volunteer opportunities at particular parks to assist the Parks Division in cleaning, maintaining, and even creating new features in our parks. The annual Summer Youth & Employment program started in 2019, where teens volunteered for eight weeks. At Prairie Creek Reservoir, the Mid-Indiana Trails Group (a local chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association serving East-Central Indiana) has created approximately nine miles trails since 2008.

The Redtail Conservancy is also active in providing/preserving natural habitat and building recreational trails in the planning area. Funds were raised through annual membership and grants \$600,000. FlatLand Resources designed, managed, and implemented the trail projects. The parks department, Mid-Indiana Trails Group, and volunteers help with maintaining the trails.



Cardinal Greenways, a non-profit organization, had approximately 100 volunteers paint over graffiti on walls and fences along Jackson Street. The City supports multiple Boy Scout and Girl Scout projects annually to enhance parks with benches, bird houses, play equipment, and numerous other projects. Community garden clubs volunteer to plant and maintain large landscape areas throughout the City.

The City is involved in development of trails that complement the existing Cardinal Greenway/White River Trail Development. New trails are being developed along Riverside Avenue between Tillotson Avenue and Jackson Street and along South Tillotson south of the Memorial Bypass.

Relationships with Other Agencies Involved in Recreation (Cardinal Greenway, RedTail Conservancy, YMCA, etc.)

The City of Muncie has a variety of relationships with other agencies to enhance recreational opportunities available to the community. The parks department continues to explore relationships that can enhance the overall delivery of programming and services within the varied resources of the community. These include, but are not limited to:

- The City Streets Department cooperatively with MPRD to share equipment and labor on special projects, which helps both agencies to get jobs done in-house in a timelier and less expensive manner than hiring contractors.
- The City has a strong relationship with the Downtown Development Authority, providing assistance with set up and clean up for musical and cultural events.
- The City partners with the Muncie Public Schools to share facilities and sports fields as needed.
- The City consults regularly with Minnetrista and the DNR on conservation, natural resources and horticulture-related matters to educate and train city staff on current trends/issues.
- The City consults regularly with the John Frank league football staff on field issues and shares supplies/equipment as needed.
- The City partners with the Muncie YMCA, Purdue Extension – Delaware County to provide equipment, facilities and services to support events for these groups.
- These partnerships allow MPRD to enhance and improve its services and programming. MPRD staff track the activities of these and other community recreation providers to avoid duplication of services.

This plan update has been driven by the recognition by the parks board and staff that additional grant funding is available and should be pursued in the short-term to help accumulate resources for improvement of the system. Key to that was having a Five-Year Master Plan developed by the guidelines of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved by April 15, 2021 to allow for applications in the next funding cycle. Table 1 presents a timeline for development of this five-year plan.

Table 1: Plan Development Schedule

	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Demographics	X						
Land Inventory			X				
Public Survey			X	X			
Needs Assessment/Plan Development		X			X	X	
Public Meeting							X
Board Approval/ Submission to INDNR							X



2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Definition of Planning Area

The planning area for this Master Plan includes all areas within the boundaries of the City of Muncie and expands to Prairie Creek Reservoir. While this plan recognizes that the actual service areas of some MPRD parks, facilities, and programs may extend beyond the defined boundaries of the planning area, the primary purpose of this plan is to first and foremost identify and address the park and recreation needs of Muncie residents. The following map depicts the planning area and location of MPRD parks (Figure 1).

The corporate limits of the City of Muncie are the primary study area for the purposes of this master plan. Muncie's Park and Recreation Department (MPRD) manage 29 parks, including Prairie Creek Park. Prairie Creek is located in Perry Township in the southeast corner of Delaware County. Prairie Creek Park, the largest park in the city's park system, is leased from the Indiana American Water Company Inc. by the Park & Recreation Board of the City of Muncie until 2072.

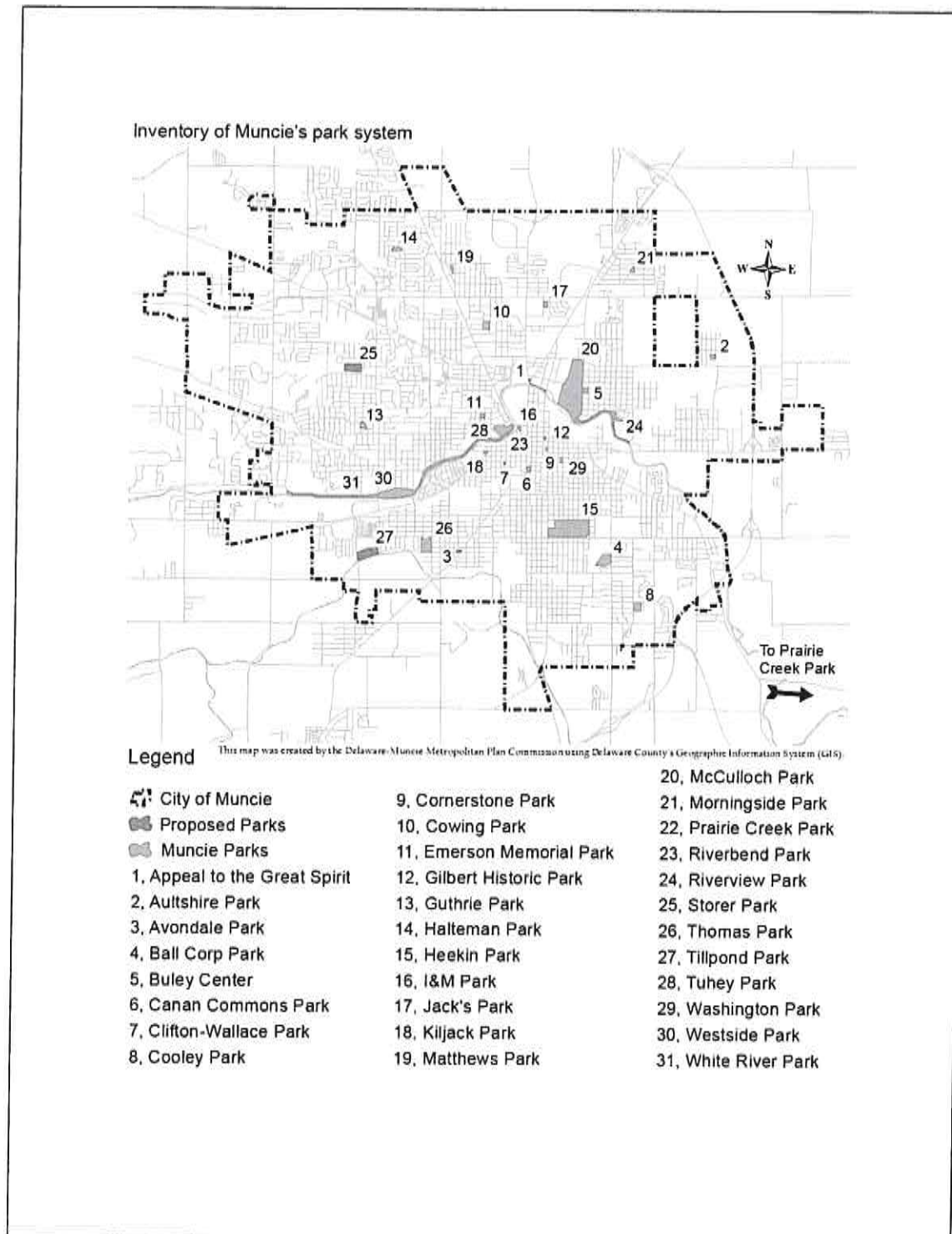
This plan focuses on all park properties and the City's need for parks and recreation. While there is anecdotal evidence that Prairie Creek Park is frequented by rural residents more than any other City park; currently any impact of visitation by rural residents on any park is not seen as a burden. Rather, it is a positive sign. An attractive and frequently-used parks system is recognized as a critical quality of life indicator that can increase the attractiveness of a community to residential and economic development. That said, the commitment of the City towards greenway and trail expansion, such as the recent trails added to Morrison Road and South Tillotson Avenue, as well as the Riverside Trail on the west side of the city which is currently in the works is clear evidence that the City supports these types of improvements. Similar projects within the main parks system (e.g., Cooley Park) further demonstrate civic commitment to park space. This commitment is part of what is driving this planning effort – to allow the City and the parks department to get the resources it needs to dramatically improve the quality of place in Muncie. The economic benefit of non-resident park draw is well proven. We believe the small increases in operating cost that may be intertwined with the added non-resident user burden is well worth the improved perceived value of the parks experience in Muncie.³

Goals of this Plan

For many years, Muncie's park system has existed in a "maintenance" mode. The parks were mowed, the trash picked up, trees planted, minor upkeep occurred, and in general that was the extent of the attention that the parks had seen for several decades due to limited budgets. The MPRD is currently operating without a master plan (approved by INDNR) or evaluation tool, which

³ This last sentence paraphrases a comment from a DNR reviewer.

Figure 1: City of Muncie Parks



makes the City ineligible for state grants. This plan identifies the current and future needs of the community, updates level of service standards, assesses MPRD's financial strength, and provides an action plan with a 5-year strategic implementation of goals and objectives. The Master Plan represents MPRD's continued commitment to providing a quality park and recreation system for the City of Muncie. This plan addresses changes to the community, evolving recreation trends, remodeling of parks and facilities, and the advent of new recreational programming. Certainly the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic experience, while not a focus of this plan, will be integrated into long-term thinking of how parks and programming can provide diverse options for recreation for all sectors of the community.

The goals of the Master Plan are presented below. They were developed by MPRD staff and a planning committee established to support development of this plan.



Cardinal greenway crossing of the White River near downtown Muncie.

Goal 1: Explore enhancing and developing recreation and environmental education programs with special consideration given to activities that improve health and wellness

Objectives:

- a. Provide inclusive and innovative recreation programs;
- b. Continue to develop promotional brochures, City website, social media platforms, and materials which inform the public on the parks and recreational programming.
- c. Enhance the MPRD image and "brand."
- d. Renovate and enhance existing sports facilities to support such programs.
- e. Maintain and encourage additional partnerships with schools and other recreational

- f. groups to further enhance and diversify the programs, leagues, and special events available to residents.
- g. Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages and abilities of the population all year long.

Goal 2: Following guidelines from the existing ADA transition plans, improve the park system's recreational facilities to ensure accessibility in all parks for persons of all abilities both mentally and physically

Objectives:

- a. Continue to implement ADA transition plans for Westside, Heekin, and McCulloch parks;
- b. To develop new facilities, and renovate existing facilities, that will meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) in keeping with the principals of Universal Accessibility;
- c. To develop new facilities that integrate ADA accommodations in such a way that they are seamlessly used by all residents within the community and to not cause separation of users based on abilities; and,
- d. Conduct an Access Audit and create an ADA compliance Transition Plan.

Goal 3: Create a community with diverse, attractive, and inspiring parks and greenways that enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the community and provide key multi-modal transportation linkages

Objectives:

- a. Acquire additional cultural, recreational, and natural parklands as appropriate to balance the existing park system (the city has plans for new parks along South Tillotson south of Memorial Drive and on the site of the former Storer Elementary school on Muncie's west side);
- b. Create individual development plans for each park;
- c. Update and assess current tree inventory;
- d. Develop opportunities, alone or in partnership with other agencies, to educate citizens about the area's natural resources.
- e. Ensure resources are available for short- and long-term maintenance of trails;
- f. Identify appropriate bus stops and amenities along the trails; and,
- g. Educate public on how to use the trail system.

Goal 4: Improve community recreation resources through cooperative efforts with agencies and adjoining governmental units in providing the public with parks, recreation facilities and programming

Objectives:

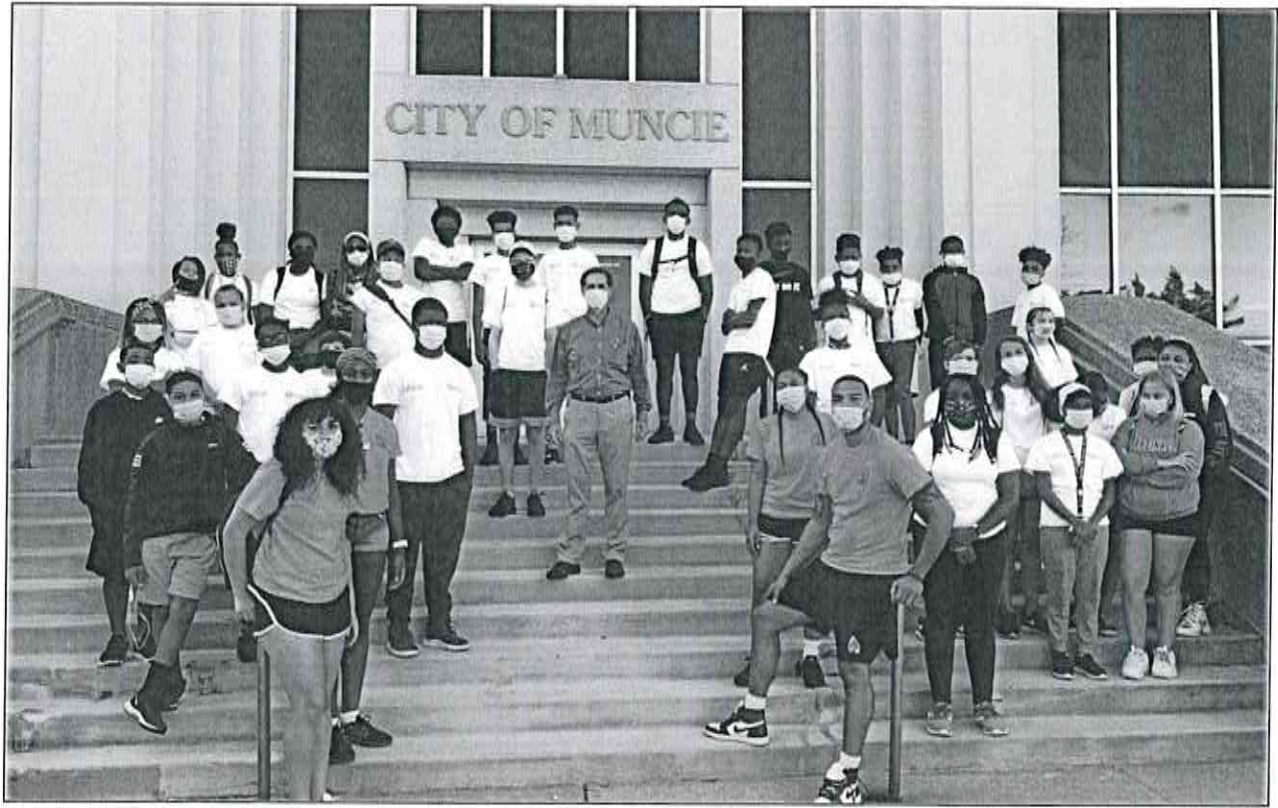
- a. Work with Muncie-Delaware Metropolitan Plan Commission and responsible parties in Yorktown, Daleville, and Albany to identify coordination opportunities
- b. Seek grant funding to support new initiatives and operational costs.
- c. Hold more cultural events;
- d. Host a variety of youth and senior/masters events;
- e. Partner with environmental and sporting agencies on events; and,
- f. Create a volunteer management system in partnership with stakeholders.

Goal 5: Update development plan for Prairie Park with emphasis on financial and organizational stability and recognizing the overall visibility it brings to the community through Ironman and related events.

Objectives:

- a. Update development plan for Prairie Creek Park; and,
- b. Allow for dedication of financial resources independent of city parks operation.





4. SCOPING

The information provided in Chapter 4 is largely drawn from the 2014-2019 parks plan.⁴ The City of Muncie is generally flat to gently rolling with elevation ranging from 900 to 1,000 feet above sea level. The highest elevations are found on the east side of Muncie and the lowest elevations are found on the west side of Muncie along the White River and York Prairie Creek/Hiatt Ditch.

Natural Features and Landscape

The majority of the land in Muncie has been developed. According to State land-use-codes, the majority of Muncie's land-use is residential, followed by commercial, government, agriculture, industrial and finally vacant land. The parks of Muncie's park system that are within the corporate boundaries of Muncie represent about two percent of the land in the City.

Natural Regions

Muncie is in Indiana's Central Till Plain Natural Region, the largest natural region in the state. "The Central Till Plain is largely a level to gently undulating, somewhat monotonous landscape that was formerly heavily forested. Its deep, fertile glacial soils supported great forests of beech and maple, oak and ash and elm."

Muncie contains two of the three sub-regions that make up the Central Till Plain Natural Region. The northern half of Muncie is in the Bluffton Till Plain section while the southern half of Muncie is in the Tipton Till Plain section. Both of these sub-regions contain flatwood communities. According to IDNR, Central Till Plain Flatwoods are significant because they are a high quality natural community that is categorized as imperiled in the state and rare to uncommon globally. The Bluffton Till Plain contains end moraines while the Tipton Till Plain is noted for flatwoods and mesic upland forests.

Eco-regions

Eco-regions delineate areas that contain similar ecosystems, including their type, quality, and quantity. There are three eco-regions in Muncie that are all a part of the Eastern Corn Belt Plains-the Clayey, High Limit Till Plains, the Loamy, High Lime Till Plains, and the Whitewater Interlobate Area. The Clayey, High Lime Till Plains eco-region is characterized by slightly less productive soils than less swampy Maumee Lake Plains. While it was once beech forest and scattered elm-ash swamp forest, this area is now predominantly farmed. No exceptional fish communities exist in the turbid, low gradient streams of this eco-region.

⁴City of Muncie's 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2014, Muncie Parks Department and Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission, April 2014

The Whitewater Interlobate Areas eco-region has distinctive cool water, coarse-bottomed streams that are perennial and fed by abundant groundwater. The redbreasted dace, northern brook stickleback, and banded sculpin occur: they are absent or uncommon in eco-regions. Unique Ozarkian invertebrates also occur in other eco-regions. Dolomitic drift and meltwater deposits are characteristic and overlie limestone, calcareous shale, and dolomitic mudstone.

Geology

Muncie's geology originates from the Middle Paleozoic Era. This includes sedimentary rocks from the Silurian period (443-416 million years ago), Devonian period (416-359 million years ago), and Mississippian Epoch (359-318 million years ago) of the Carboniferous period (359-299 million years ago). The majority of rocks stemming from these periods are limestone, dolomite, and shale.

Soil

Consisting of 44 different soil types, Muncie is predominantly made up of Blount, Miami, and Urban Land soils. Fox, Pewamo, Sloan, Eel, Crosby, Glynwood, Treaty, and Udorhant soil types are marginally represented. All other soil types are minimally represented.

Miami soils, the soil series of Indiana, are moderately well drained fertile soils used for crops including corn, soybeans, and winter wheat. Blount somewhat poorly drained, slowly permeable soils. Urban Land soils refer to "built-up" land. When reviewed for building site development, the soils found in Muncie range from the classification of "not limited" to "very limited". Most soils classified as "very limited" are soils that have a shallow depth to the saturated zone (which is not conducive for basements with septic systems) and have a high potential to shrink-swell; "very limited" does not mean that the area is unbuildable.

Some soils in Muncie are hydric, which is characteristic of wetland areas. The hydric soils are found mostly around the perimeter of Muncie, with a greater percentage to the northwest. Most areas in Muncie with hydric soils are areas abutting creeks and ditches and areas that are currently used to cultivate crops. Properties with hydric soils may be good to convert to parks as they would lend well to naturalized parks with trails for enjoying native wetland habitats. As there is a strong trend of people promoting walking trails and native habitats, this would be a great opportunity to provide both.

Watersheds

Muncie is located in the Upper White River Watershed of the Patoka & White River Basin of the Wabash River Basin of the Ohio Region. Watersheds are identified by their designated proper name and Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC), a set of numbers ranging from two to 16 digits long - the longer the HUC number, the smaller the area that is being identified.

The corporate boundaries of Muncie include six 4-digit watersheds - White River-Muncie Creek, White River-Truitt Ditch, Buck Creek-Macedonia Creek, White River-Buck Creek (lower), white

River-York Prairie Creek, and Jakes Creek-Eagle Branch. Prairie Creek Park is located in the Prairie Creek-Cunningham/Carmichael Ditches watershed.

The White River Watershed Project (WRWP) is a community project established in 2001 to clean up non-point source water pollution at the level of 14 watersheds. The Buck Creek-Macedonia Creek watershed and the Prairie Creek-Cunningham/Carmichael Ditches watershed are 2 of the 3 watersheds that were initially included for study by the WRWP. The Buck Creek-Macedonia Creek watershed was included due to the variety of land uses represented and because it is listed with IDEM as a waterway with impaired water quality. The Prairie Creek-Cunningham/Carmichael Ditches watershed is mostly agricultural but also provides a rare amenity for this region, being Prairie Creek Reservoir. The White River Management plan created by the WRWP recommended that a strategic master plan be developed for this watershed. This recommendation was in concert with a similar recommendation in prior comprehensive and watershed planning efforts conducted by the County.

Beginning in 2009, the WRWP added both White River-Muncie Creek and White River-Truitt Ditch watersheds to further benefit water quality in this area. These additions made approximately 44% of the land in Muncie available to participate in cost-share projects for cleaning up non-point source water pollution.

Hydrography

Muncie's major waterway is the White River. Feeding the White River within Muncie are Hamilton Ditch, Holt Ditch, and Truitt Ditch, all feeding into the White River northeastern quadrant of Muncie. Buck Creek runs through the south side of Muncie, feeding into the White River on the western edge of the Town of Yorktown. Buck creek is unique due to its high-quality biological ecosystem and its potential as a cold-water trout stream. York Prairie Creek/Hiatt Ditch runs through the northwest quadrant of Muncie, joining the White River between Yorktown and Daleville in the western park of Delaware County.

The White River is Muncie's primary drinking water source with Prairie creek reservoir as a backup drinking water source. As Muncie's only major natural feature, White River runs approximately 9 miles through Muncie. Bank fishing is permitted along most of the river, downstream from the East Jackson Street Bridge. Residents also have access to 5.5 miles of river frontage by means of the White River Greenway. Additional access to White River is available at McCulloch Park and Westside Park, while Heron Overlook, Riverview Park, Riverview Overlook, Appeal to the Great Spirit Park, Oakhurst Overlook, White River Cantilever, Riverbend Park, Tuhey Park, Bicentennial Overlook, and West Point Overlook offer views for enjoying the river.

Wetlands

Not including the White River, within Muncie there are 90 areas comprising 240 acres identified as wetlands by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, only two areas are protected- The John M. Craddock Wetland Preserve and the Donald E. Miller Wildlife Area. Several of the inventoried

wetland areas have structures on them. Wetlands are some of the Nation's most ecologically and economically important habitats, and provide benefits for fish, wildlife and people.¹⁰

Wetlands clean our water, recharge groundwater aquifers, provide protection from flooding, control erosion, provide wildlife habitat, and educational and recreational opportunities. As previously mentioned, 24% of Indiana was once covered by wetlands. Wetlands not only provide environmental benefits, they are also a part of our natural heritage.

Due to the importance of protecting and perpetuating wetlands, identified wetland areas would be prime locations for establishing protected naturalized areas (a park classification).

Prairie Creek reservoir is a man-made reservoir consisting of approximately 1,275 acres of water that functions as the backup drinking water source for Muncie. The majority of the reservoir and surrounding property are leased to Muncie as parkland - Prairie Creek Park. It is home to nature conservation and community clubs.

Climate

Muncie's climate is mild with distinct seasons. Muncie receives the majority of its precipitation during May through July, though December and January are months with the highest relative humidity. Fall and spring tend to have strong storms, including tornadoes, due to the transition between hot and cold fronts. January is the coldest month with an average low of 19 degrees Fahrenheit and an average high of 34 degrees Fahrenheit. January has the most days with a temperature under 0 degrees Fahrenheit, with an average of 1.6 days under 0 degrees F. July is the hottest month with an average high of 85 degrees Fahrenheit and an average low of 64 degrees Fahrenheit. July has the most days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, with an average of 6.1 days above 90 degrees F.

Flora

As previously discussed, most of Muncie's native flora was replaced by agriculture and then again by development. Muncie has been designated as a Tree City USA for over a decade now. This is a program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. With the street tree inventory complete, most street trees in Muncie are silver maples: sugar maple, apple, green ash, honey locust, Bradford pear, Norway maple, Siberian elm, catalpa, and Sycamore are also well represented among the 100+ species found in Muncie. The Bradford pear, an invasive tree that once goes wild, is a detriment to animals because of their thorny ends. Conversely, most wooded areas in Muncie are plagued by invasive species; primarily 3 species of bush honeysuckle and garlic mustard. Other invasive plants in the city include Reed Canary grass (found along the river), Canada Thistle, and Crown Vetch. Delaware County is part of the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) initiative that has been implemented statewide to deal with invasive species. This activity is known as the Delaware County Invasive Plant Project (DIPP) and is coordinated by the Delaware County

Soil and Water Conservation District and the Purdue Extension Delaware County. For further information on the concept refer to <http://www.sicim.info/cismas>.

According to the Bureau of Water Quality, the White River is home to 71 species of fish and more than 100 species of insects in Muncie. In recent years there have been regular sightings of various hawks, falcons and herons demonstrating the extent of improvement in the environment for Muncie to once again be home to these species. Deer, raccoon, opossum, squirrel, rabbits, bats and robins are just a few of the common species that make Muncie their home.\

Muncie's mayor, Dan Ridenour, has an ambitious agenda of planting 1,000 new trees in the city by 2026, which is approximately 250 per year and removing 500 old or diseased trees. Invasive plants are also a detriment. Using the public to help the Urban Forester identify invasive plants would help the process. Public notices will also assist in communication methods. Incentive programs will also help garner the public's help.

Our natural resources are at risk. These invasive species are a recurring problem and demand annual spraying. These activities portend continued conservation and environmental protection along the White river and in conjunction with partner agencies like the Red-Tail Conservatory and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The MPRD should consider the impact of additional volunteers in this area of the county as there has been and continues to be concern.

Man-Made, Historical, and Cultural

Muncie was incorporated under the status of "town" in 1854. In 1865 Muncie's citizens voted to have their town incorporated as a city. Serving as the county seat of Delaware County, Muncie is the only second-class city in the county. Muncie, seat of Delaware County, is sometimes referred to as "America's Hometown." The famous "Middletown" studies were carried out by a team of sociologists, led by Robert and Helen Lynd, in 1929 and 1937. The Lynds were followed by numerous other sociologists and agencies, making Muncie one of the most studied communities in the world.

Ball State Teachers College was founded in 1918 and has since become Ball State University. Ivy Tech Community College also has a campus in Muncie. The Ball family, which moved its glass manufacturing business to Muncie from Buffalo, NY in 1887, provided the principal funding for Minnetrista, a cultural center serving east central Indiana. Other museums include the Muncie Children's Museum and the National Model Aviation Museum. The Ball brothers also funded Ball Memorial Hospital, which opened in 1929.

Growing from the natural gas boom of the late 19th century, Muncie was a thriving city until the late 20th century when factories began closing down. Muncie's parks have a rich history stemming back to the beginning of the 20th century. In May of 1901, "Mr. George F. McCulloch informed the Common Council of the City of Muncie by letter that he would make a gift of the grounds known as McCulloch Park to the City of Muncie, the only condition to said gift being that the City of Muncie

hold the real estate in trust as a public park for the free use of all inhabitants of the city." Located on the site of the burned down Whitely Harvesting Co., McCulloch Park became the home of deer, a bear, monkeys and "McCulloch Field" a baseball field where semi-pro baseball games were played. Following is a description of the history of baseball in Muncie's McCulloch park.

In 1906 Muncie fielded its first professional baseball team, the Muncie Fruit Jars, playing in the class C Interstate Association. The team returned for the 1908 season in the class D Indiana-Ohio League folded on June 8 with the team in last place.

Over the following years the McCulloch diamond was home to numerous semi-pro clubs. In 1931 a permanent wooden grandstand was erected. Following this a local team named the Muncie Citizens was founded and enjoyed many successful seasons, especially during the depression years. During the 1930s several Major League teams visited the ballparks and on one occasion the St. Louis Browns suffered defeat at the hands of the local squad.

On July 4, 1938, McCulloch Park was overwhelmed with an estimated crowd of 80,000 people, more than the population of the entire city. They came for an Independence Day church gathering, a baseball double-header, along with what has been described as the greatest fireworks display in the history of the park.

During World War II, as part of an effort by Major League Baseball to reduce travel expenses the Pittsburgh Pirates came to Muncie for spring training. The National League club would call McCulloch Park its spring home from 1943 to 1945. During this era the Pirates were led by manager Frank Frisch and Coach Honus Wagner, both Hall of Famers, who gained many fans for the team. These spring training years brought several other big league teams to the park for exhibition games. It is said that Detroit Tiger Rudy York hit the longest home run ever out of McCulloch Park.

Following the war, professional baseball returned to McCulloch Park in the form of the Muncie Reds, a class D team, who called the park home from 1947 to 1950. During these years the team was an affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds.

After the Reds disbanded in 1950, the field went back to being used by Amateur and semi-pro clubs. On Friday, June 13, 1952, fire struck the grandstand, completely destroying it. While the grandstand has never been replaced, the field was refurbished and has been maintained throughout the years.

Westside Park is one of the first parks that hosted baseball games played by teams in the Negro League including the Indianapolis ABCs. Westside Park was also home to a skating rink and a rollercoaster known as the Triple Figure Eight during the early 20th century. While this park is still popular, it lacks the facilities that it once supported.

The National Register of Historic Places includes nearly 40 structures and districts in the City of Muncie. The most relevant properties for this master plan are the William Henry Luick Farmhouse and Beech Grove Cemetery. Both of these properties offer amenities that park departments often maintain although neither property is overseen by Muncie's Parks & Recreation Department. At a minimum, the Urban Forester should be consulted for care of these properties' trees.

Man-made Features

With the majority of Muncie developed, there are numerous man-made features in the area. For the purposes of this plan, only major features and those relevant to parks and recreation will be highlighted. One highway and two state roads (US 35, SR 67 and SR 3) provide north-south regional access, while SR 332 brings travelers into Muncie on the Northwest side and SR 32, running east-west, brings travelers right through the middle of the city. Muncie also has two railroad operations (CSX and Norfolk Southern) which have multiple railroad lines that traverse the city.

As part of the City and County efforts to create a multi-modal community, bicycle / pedestrian projects have been emphasized both in planning and physical construction. The Delaware County Metropolitan Planning Commission conducted a Safe Routes to Schools program. The City has recently embarked on a number of new bike/ped trail projects including on Morrison Road and South Tillotson Avenue. There is a new section of paved trail linking the crushed stone trail on the White River levee adjacent to Muncie Central High School to the Cardinal Greenway. These are good examples of how there has been positive interaction among the agencies and government entities in the community. This plan supports that in every way possible.

Muncie has over 30 bridges with the majority spanning the White River and others spanning Muncie Creek, Hiatt Ditch, and Buck Creek. Only a few bridges are overpasses to mitigate railroad and vehicular traffic. The majority of bridges crossing ditches and streams do not include sidewalks which creates a safety concern for pedestrians. The majority of bridges crossing the White River include sidewalks. As bridges are reconstructed, sidewalks are being included. Large roads, bridges and railroads create age-specific boundaries. Many people do not want young children crossing large roads, bridges or railroads without supervision. This creates barriers to youth access to parks thus these boundaries are utilized in establishing the level of service to some parks. The DMMPC has engaged in an effort to create a "Safe Routes to Schools Program" through state funding.

Muncie has greatly benefited from the establishment of Cardinal Greenways, Inc. Cardinal Greenways, Inc has constructed two recreation trails in Muncie, the Cardinal Greenway, a trails-to-trails project, and the White River Greenway. Both trails are available for all types of non-motorized transportation and along both greenways have overlooks that provide spaces to rest and enjoy scenic views.

On property bought from CSX Transportation Corporation, the Cardinal Greenway provides 62 miles of paved trail from Marion to Richmond with an on-road section of ~15 miles between Gas City and Gaston; 51 miles of the paved trail are continuous from Gaston, IN to Richmond, IN (going

through Muncie northwest - southwest). The Cardinal Greenway is named for the last passenger train to regularly run this trail line. The Cardinal Greenway provides connections to 3 of Muncie's parks- McCulloch Park, Ball Community Park and Prairie Creek Park.

The White River Greenway runs over 5.5 miles along the White River through the heart of Muncie joining seven city parks (Westside Park, White River Park, Tuhey Park, Riverbend Park, Appeal to the Great Spirit, McCulloch Park and Riverview Park), downtown Muncie, Minnetrista Cultural Center, and Ball State University. At the east end of the greenway, an additional connection to the Cardinal Greenway is planned. Overlooks along the White River Greenway include Heron Overlook, Riverview Overlook, Oakhurst Overlook, the White River Cantilever, Bicentennial Overlook, and West Point Overlook. The White River Greenway was designed to create trail access to abutting neighborhoods providing enhanced access for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross major roads that intersect the river.

The White River has been dredged and a levee built along its southern shore through Muncie as a protective measure from flooding. With the amount of channeling conducted through the years, Muncie's streams could practically be added to the list of man-made features. The majority of the streams are now characterized by straightened waterways with steep, eroding embankments of channels instead of the winding paths and more gently sloped embankments that streams tend to be characterized by. And as previously stated, Prairie Creek Reservoir is a man-made reservoir created as a back-up drinking water supply for the city.

Cultural/Ethic Background, Festivals, Arts

Festivals and community gatherings are an integral part of the fabric of many communities and are almost always economic drivers of some type. Muncie has several fairly long-standing festivals by which many residents mark their calendars. Some of these are:

- Black Music Month is held annually in June in McCulloch Park with Forward Visions.
- The Homecoming festival is held every four years in McCulloch Park in midsummer.
- Health fairs are held annually in Heekin Park.
- Movie in the Parks are held in multiple parks during the summer season.
- Arts in the Park is held with Cornerstone Center of the Arts and a variety of local artists.
- Juneteenth is celebrated in Heekin Park in June.
- Muncie Symphony Orchestra plays music at Westside Park in June.
- Carnival held at Westside Park in July.
- Christmas in the Park is held in Heekin Park throughout December. Trees and cabins are lit with lights.
- Ron Bonham Day is held during the summer on or near the 4th of July holiday at Prairie Creek Park.
- The Old Washington Street Festival takes place along east Washington Street in Muncie's historic Kimbrough District in September. This annual street festival, which has been happening for over 30 years, provides opportunities for visitors to tour some of the historic homes along the street while providing a multitude of vendors selling arts, crafts, and food.

Environmental

Muncie's development and growth were greatly shaped by its industrial based economy through the late 19th century and the majority of the 20th century. Years of industrial manufacturing left their mark upon Muncie. Indiana's Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has over the years identified numerous concerns, including but not limited to:

- Additional underground storage tanks;
- Industrial waste sites found predominantly in the southern half of Muncie.
- EPA facilities (sites subject to environmental regulation or of environmental interest);
- Additional brownfields, permitted solid waste sites, septic waste sites, and cleanup sites; and,
- A number of locations are in a voluntary remediation agreement (VRA) with IDEM.

Broadly speaking, the environmental implications are that, while most of the existing Muncie parks have likely been vetted for environmental issues, any new projects (both redevelopment of existing parks and creation of new parks) should be carefully evaluated for environmental issues.

Prairie Creek reservoir is a man-made reservoir that functions as the backup drinking water source for Muncie. The majority of the reservoir and surrounding property are leased to Muncie as parkland - Prairie Creek Park. This park offers unique recreational opportunities for Muncie and Delaware County residents. Prairie Creek is referenced often in this document and its role in the overall community cannot be overstated. It is likely outside the limits of the environmental contamination that exists in the city but any projects that are done at Prairie Creek park should include in their evaluation consideration of the fact that the reservoir could provide drinking water to the City.



5. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

Community Description

The City of Muncie is the largest municipality in Delaware County and comprises nearly sixty percent of Delaware County's population. (see Table 2). Located in the middle of the County, Muncie is 58 miles northeast of Indianapolis in the east-central portion of the state. The jurisdiction of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the City of Muncie. According to the 2019 U.S. Census projection, the population of Muncie was 67,999. This makes up approximately 60% of the population of Delaware County (114,135). It should be noted the population has decreased by 3% since the 2010 Census.

Muncie is approximately 27 square miles in size, making it as large as many cities in the state of Indiana. Major traffic carriers include I-69 which runs parallel of the city. State Road 67 carries traffic on the southern and eastern sides of the city.

Demographics

Muncie's population profile mirrors that for much of small urban and rural Indiana. Negative growth has been occurring for decades and is expected to continue according to growth projections from Ball State's Center for Business and Economic Research and other population forecasts. What this means for parks is two-fold. Caution should be exercised when considering new or expanded facilities unless they can contribute to a quality of place that will enable the community to thrive.

Age Distribution

While most park facilities can be enjoyed by people of any age, some facilities are preferred by different age groups; examples of the spectrum of interests would include skateboarding and shuffleboard. Whether a neighborhood is dominated by the elderly or children can affect what types of facilities, age demographics can help illustrate types of recreational programming.

The following table shows the age demographics for Muncie. By viewing Table 2, the information quickly shows the young majority specifically with the 5-19 age group in 2019. Another large age group with a slightly higher percentage is the 20-24 range. This is caused by the large level of students at Ball State University.

Ethnicity and Race

The U.S. Census Bureau doesn't collect data reflecting people's ethnicity, so the varying ethnic backgrounds of the population are unknown. Identifying ethnic backgrounds would be important

to recognize the potential interest in establishing ethnically based/heritage festivals and public art projects.

Until all people have equal opportunity, race information is useful for determining eligibility for some grants. Muncie's population is generally composed of White (Caucasian American), Black (African American), Hispanic, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, and people of two or more races. Some people also identified themselves as "Other Race." The majority of the population is White in Muncie. Eleven percent of the population is classified as Black or African American. Populations of people of two or more races, people of the Hispanic race and people of the Asian races are the next highest minorities. A detailed table of Muncie's racial demographics and its recent changes is provided below.

Table 2 Demographic Indicators, Delaware County, IN

<i>Population</i>	Muncie city	Delaware County	Indiana
Population estimates, July 1, 2019	67,999	114,135	6,732,219
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010	70,206	117,670	6,484,051
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019	-3.1%	-3.0%	3.8%
<i>Age and Gender (2019)</i>			
Persons under 5 years, percent	4.9%	4.8%	6.2%
Persons under 18 years, percent	16.7%	18.2%	23.3%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	13.9%	17.5%	16.1%
Female persons, percent	52.1%	51.8%	50.7%
<i>Race (2019)</i>			
White alone, percent	83.1%	88.7%	84.8%
Black or African American alone, percent	11.1%	7.2%	9.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%
Asian alone, percent	1.7%	1.3%	2.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races, percent	3.4%	2.4%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	3.4%	2.6%	7.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	80.9%	86.6%	78.4%

Source: Census QuickFacts;

[U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#)

Economic Profile

Muncie's household income lags behind both the County and the State and Muncie's unemployment rate is higher. The poverty rate is also considerably higher however it has decreased about six percentage points since the 2014 plan was completed, which was based on 2011 data (which was during the aftermath of the Great Recession). This is a positive sign but observations made in the 2014 plan remain largely true – "Having so many people living in poverty means that more people rely on parks for recreational opportunities yet also don't have the ability

to afford paying fees.” Located in a designated federal Opportunity Zone, 100% of the Muncie Community School district students participate in the Federal Free and Reduced School Meals and Milk Programs.

Table 3 Economic Indicators, Delaware County, IN

Employment & Income	Muncie	Delaware County	Indiana
Median Household Income (2019) \$	\$33,944	\$45,912	\$57,603
Poverty Rate (2019) %	30.9	21.5	13.4
Labor Force (2019)*	33,841	53,945	3,363,860
Employed	31,170	51,853	3,202,509
Unemployed	2,671	2,092	161,351
Unemployment Rate	7.9	3.9	4.8

*Note: Labor force includes employed persons and unemployed persons actively looking for work.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

A new focus is on Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. They earn more than the US poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. In Delaware County, 29% of households are ALICE households, compared to the state average of 22%. A majority of the poverty seen in Delaware County is generational (poverty lasting at least two generations) and is very difficult to address. The languishing economy has never recovered from the automotive industry's departure.

Major Employers

Table 4 shows the major employers in Delaware County. Key industries include education, health care, advanced manufacturing, food processing, logistics and distribution, alternative energy, and information technology.

Businesses include Fortune 500 companies Concentrix, Progress Rail Services, and SuperValu. Keihin IPT Manufacturing (Honda Supplier) helps anchor the Airpark Industrial Park. Auto manufacturer Magna Powertrain (MPT-Muncie) continues to expand its operations in Delaware County in the Industrial Centre Industrial Park. Progress Rail Services, a subsidiary of Caterpillar Inc., has located a locomotive assembly facility in Muncie. Automotive supplier Mursix Corporation has recently expanded its building footprint and workforce, and continues to invest as the business grows, currently occupying nearly a half-million square feet. Last, Navient has expanded its facility, adding hundreds of jobs for Muncie residents, making it the largest for-profit employer in Delaware County.

Ball State University, a public institution, employs 3,000 full-time employees, including tenure track and contract faculty; professional personnel; clerical, technical, and managerial staff; and service personnel. Ball State is Muncie's largest employer. In the 2021 edition of US News' Best Colleges and Universities, the university ranked #284. They offer 150 undergraduate, 80 masters, 20 doctoral, and 14 specialist degree programs. Total enrollment in 2019 was 22,500.

Another non-profit employer is Indiana University Health Ball Memorial Hospital. IU Health Ball strives to provide its patients with the highest quality of medical care and services. It serves as a tertiary referral center and teaching hospital for East Central Indiana and part of Indiana University Health. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission and maintains 1.2 million square feet of facilities. It is part of an elite group of hospitals with Magnet designation for nursing excellence. It is near the campus of Ball State University; which it shares multiple educational partnerships. The hospital was founded in 1929 and has more than 3,000 team members.

Muncie's household income lags behind both the County and the State and Muncie's unemployment rate is higher. As noted earlier, the poverty rate is also considerably higher than that of the County or State, however it has decreased. This is a positive sign.

Muncie Community Schools and a fairly even distribution of educational and private manufacturing and business interests make up the bulk of the larger employers. Many of the schools have playgrounds, tracks, and other facilities that are available to the public. Those facilities that are not available on a general basis should be evaluated for times they could be used. Examples may include the tracks at Ball State and Muncie Central and tennis courts at those and other locations which are generally locked.

As noted elsewhere in this report, the history of Muncie has consisted of a continuing evolution of cooperation between the private and public sector. Many of the businesses in the community had their origin with the gas boom, when the public sector basically used the availability of a free natural resource as a business incentive to attract employers. That cooperation should continue. Improvement of parks programming and facilities will make Muncie a better place, which should lead to economic enhancement and improved quality of life for all residents.

Table 4 Major Employers, Delaware County, IN

Employees	Company	Principal Officer	Industry	City
3,379	Ball State University	Geoffrey Mearns	Education	Muncie
2,613	IU Health Ball Memorial and Physician Practices Team Members	Dr. Jeff Bird	Medical Services	Muncie
650	Muncie Community Schools	Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkowski	Education	Muncie
633	Navient	Dan Vipperman	Customer Service Center	Muncie
555	Concentrix	Sharon Bergen	Customer Service Center	Daleville
551	First Merchants Corporation	Scott McKee	Financial Services	Muncie
550	Meridian Health Services	Hank Milius	Behavior Health	Muncie
516	Youth Opportunity Center	Rick Rowray	Youth Services	Muncie
500	Progress Rail	Jim Shirvinski	Rail and Transit Products	Muncie
465	City of Muncie	Mayor Dan Ridenour	Government	Muncie
460	MPT Muncie/Magna Powertrain	Stephen Brand	Manufacturing	Muncie
452	Delaware County Government Offices	James King	Government	Muncie
392	Delaware Community Schools	Reece Mann	Education	Muncie
362	Lifetouch	Lori Boyer	Customer Service Center	Muncie
350	Hillcroft Services	Debbie Bennett	Social Services	Muncie
349	Yorktown Community Schools	Dr. Gregory Hinshaw	Education	Yorktown
323	Wal-Mart North	Beth Pea	Retail	Muncie
300	Mursix Corporation	Todd Murray	Manufacturing	Yorktown
295	DIY Group, Inc.	Denny Durham	Packaging and Distribution	Muncie
274	Wal-Mart South	Vic Warner	Retail	Muncie
273	Ontario Systems	Tim O'Brien	Software	Muncie
250	Maxon - A Honeywell Company	Diane LeDoux	Manufacturing	Muncie
247	Westminster Village	Dale Lindley	Assisted Living	Muncie
235	Terhunes, Inc./McDonald's	Robert Terhune, Jr.	Restaurants	Muncie
234	Ivy Tech Community College	Jeff Scott	Education	Muncie
220	North West Bank	Dave Heeter	Financial Services	Muncie
212	American Health Network, LLC	Sandy Dilts	Healthcare	Muncie
182	Meijer	Craig Hunter	Retail	Muncie
181	Exide Technologies	Kevin Carpenter	Manufacturing	Muncie
175	Keihin IPT Manufacturing	Kimberly West	Manufacturing	Muncie
167	R&L Carriers	Human Resources	Freight Shipping	Alexandria
160	American Electric Power	Ashley Savieo	Utility	Muncie
150	Mid-West Metal Products, Inc.	Steve Smith	Manufacturing	Muncie
143	Muncie Sanitary District	Bill Smith	Government	Muncie
125	Muncie Power Products	Ray Chambers	Truck Equipment and Mobile Power	Muncie
125	Liberty-Perry Schools	Bryan Rausch	Education	Selma
124	Wes-Del Community Schools	Kyle Mealy	Education	Gaston

Note: Employment numbers and information are always subject to change. Source: Muncie-Delaware County, Indiana Economic Development Alliance, Muncie-Delaware County Chamber of Commerce (Jan 2021); [Muncie-Delaware County, Indiana Economic Development Alliance - Major Employers](#)

Analysis of Demographic and Economic Factors

Gaining a clear understanding of the existing and projected demographic character of Muncie is an important component of the planning process. By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces. Key areas were analyzed to identify current demographic statistics and trends that can impact the planning and provision of public parks and recreation services in Muncie. Community characteristics analyzed and discussed consist of:

- Existing and projected total population
- Age and gender distribution
- Ethnic/Racial diversity
- Household and housing information

Looking at the City as a whole, if Prairie Creek Park is excluded the larger parks are generally in the eastern and southern portions of the City which is where lower income individuals tend to live. While this will be explored in more detail in the needs analysis sections of the plan, this fact suggests that recreational programming at lower cost may be a higher need than actual acquisition of new park land.

So, as noted in the 2014 plan, the Parks Department should continue aiming to continue minimizing fees as much as possible, maintaining current sponsorships and looking for new sponsorships to fund programs run through the parks department, increasing the number of staff dedicated to programming, and partnering with other organizations to enhance and expand already existing and positive programming. In particular, programs that are not fee intensive but can increase positive health outcomes (which directly improves quality of life for lower income individuals) is suggested.

The parks department has been innovative and proactive in the past several years with these types of activities (e.g., Be Heart). Finally, every opportunity should be taken to maximize use of existing facilities at the public schools and even the University levels to support these programs. The ongoing extensions of the trail network in the community (Riverside Avenue, Tillotson Avenue south) are examples of how the various governmental units are collaborating to improve the overall parks system.

6. SUPPLY ANALYSIS

Muncie's park system consists of 28 established parks in its inventory as well as three planned parks at properties owned by the City along South Tillotson, on the site of the former Storer Elementary School, and 15th and Hoyt for a total of 31 park locations. It provides administration, maintenance, and oversight of those parks. The parks department also maintains a handful of additional properties owned by public entities that are not officially a part of this department.

Classification

In order to plan for parks and recreation in the future, one needs to examine the types of facilities that currently exist in the City of Muncie. It is also helpful to compare the existing facilities to various standards as one measure of the adequacy of the parks and recreation facilities in the community. The inventory was completed by visiting the City's parks to update the inventory detailed in Muncie's previous Parks & Recreation Master Plan from 2014. Dr. Shannon Powers, Mp2lanning, and City staff worked together to complete the needed updates and revisions. Support and graphics were provided by the Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission. A review for accessibility was also completed for each of the parks.

Classifying parks into categories helps define their role in the overall system, demonstrates their relationship to each other, highlights deficiencies, helps to develop an action program, and assists in allocating funding. Muncie classifies parks into four groups: Major parks, Community parks, Special Use parks, Neighborhood parks and Park trailways. This classification system is adapted in part from the Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional Open Spaces and Trails from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. It recognizes types of parks based on size, service area, facilities and use groups. The numbers preceding each park on the inventory list identifies the location of these facilities on each of the Parks Inventory Maps in Table 5.

These parks range in size from .3 – 1,890 acres and offer a myriad of active and passive recreational activities. While some of these parks are easily accessible on foot from surrounding neighborhoods, others require travel by vehicle or non-motorized transportation and have adequate parking facilities on site. See the Existing Facilities Inventory for a complete summary of available park amenities.

Parks managed by the city of Muncie were further classified based upon whether the properties were owned by the City of Muncie or leased to the City of Muncie for park use. Because leased properties are not permanent contributions to the park system, those properties are not included in the primary analysis of the park system's level of service (park acres per population, facilities per population). Instead, leased properties are included in a secondary analysis of the park system's level of service in order to show the contribution that they make to the park system and the importance of maintaining those properties within the system. Leased properties are included in the Department's short-term planning of budgets and operations because those leases are relevant for the next 5 years. Properties that are leased include Ball Corporation Park and Prairie

Creek Park. Since the last plan, Emerson Dog Park (formerly known as Emerson Memorial Greenspace Park) and Rose Park / Ross Center properties have been deeded to the City of Muncie.

The Parks Department operates Ball Corporation Park and Prairie Creek Park through lease agreements.

Other properties were identified that contribute to the public's park and recreational opportunities in the City of Muncie. The primary factor defining if a property contributes to the public's park & recreational opportunities for this plan is whether or not the property is open to the public free of charge. The most relevant properties are the memorial parks. There are three memorial parks, of which the Parks & Recreation Department cares for two. contributing properties are grade school grounds- both Muncie Community School properties and private school properties; school buildings are not included. For the purposes of this master plan those properties have been identified as "school-parks". Muncie is also home to Ball State University. Most of the campus and the properties Ball State University owns are open to the public. Recreational facilities are only open to members for a fee. Open spaces were selected to include in Muncie's assessment. All of the previously identified properties have been classified according to their size in order to maintain uniformity for analysis.

The other primary contributing property type is greenways. Cardinal Greenway and White River Greenway are open to the public free of charge. The State of Indiana initially established the goal "of providing an easily accessible trail opportunity within 15 minutes or 7.5 miles of all Indiana residents." In 2013, the State updated their trails, greenways and bikeways plan is a progress report that includes a new goal of having a trail within 5 miles of all residents. Greenways have been included in this plan's analysis using a 1 mile service area, or a 15 minute bike ride to the greenway. There are five trail systems in Muncie: Minnetrista, Oakhurst Gardens, Christie Woods, White River, and Connector Trails. Minnetrista Cultural Center provides areas that are open to the public free of charge and areas that require an entrance fee. Areas that are open to the public free of charge have been identified and are included in the inventory of overall community resources.

Privately owned facilities that are open to the public for a fee are included in the inventory but are not included in analysis. While private parks/recreational facilities contribute to the overall recreational opportunities and greenspace for the public, they are not available to the public as a free amenity. This category includes public golf courses, putt-putt golf, indoor playground facilities, roller skating rinks, bowling alleys, Escapades, YMCA facilities, and Muncie's SportsPlex.

Parks Inventory

Table 5 presents an inventory of the current parks under the jurisdiction of the City parks department. This was based on an update of information provided by the parks department as well as assessments of each park as presented in the 2014 parks plan. A site visit was made to each park in early January to review overall conditions and compare them to the prior analyses.

Table 5: 2021 Muncie Parks Plan Inventory and Assessment

Park	Address	Location	Size (Acres)	Type	Owner	Facilities	Condition	ADA
1. Appeal to the Great Spirit	1100 N. Granville Ave.	Walnut St. and Granville	0.3	Mini Park	City of Muncie	Sculpture, landscaping, concrete encirclement with seating, downtown parking	Good	No facilities
2. Aultshire Park	1901 N. Watt Ave. Muncie, 47303	South of Cromer Ave. on Watt Ave.	2	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie Parks and Recreation	Playground equipment, shelter, basketball court, dirt/grass walking path, off-street parking	Medium to poor	Needs assessment
3. Avondale Park (PLANNED)	No specific address	15 th Street and Hoyt Street	Not defined	Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Planned park	NA	Will comply with ADA guidelines when developed
4. Ball Corp Park	2105 S. Macedonia Ave. 47302	Macedonia Ave. between 14th and 17th Streets	10.99	Large neighborhood park	Ball Corp.	Basketball court, picnic shelter and tables, crushed stone walking path, benches, fitness area, off-street parking, garbage enclosure	Medium	Needs assessment
5. Buley Cener	1111 N. Penn St., Muncie, IN 47303	Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Highland Ave., Penn St., & Russey St.	1.8	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Basketball court and playground, picnic shelter and tables, community center, off-street parking	Medium to poor	No facilities
6. Canan Commons Park	520 S. Walnut St., 47305	Walnut St., Seymour St., Mulberry St.	1.53	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Stage, open space, benches, bike racks, downtown parking	Good	No facilities

7. Clifton-Wallace Park	509 W. Charles St., 47305	Charles St., between Council St. and Cherry St.	0.34	Mini Park	City of Muncie	Minimal playground equipment, Little Free Library, picnic table, street parking	NA	Needs assessment
8. Cooley Park	2101 E 22nd St.	23rd St. and Mock Ave.	5.36	Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Baseball diamond, picnic table, basketball court (not in place as of Jan 21), playground equipment, walking path, major reconstruction project underway, off-street parking,	Medium to poor	Needs assessment
9. Cornerstone Park	101 S. Madison, St., Muncie, IN 47303	Corner of East Main and Madison	0.3	Mini Park	City of Muncie	Sculpture, landscaping, concrete encirclement with seating, downtown parking	Good	Needs Assessment
10. Cowing Park	2501 N. Pauline Ave., Muncie, IN 47303	Pauline Ave., Cowing Dr., Tilmore Dr., & Cowing Park Ln.	4.16	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Open space, soccer goals, basketball and tennis courts, picnic tables, playground equipment, grill, street parking	Good	Needs assessment
11. Emerson Memorial Dog Park	901 W. Beechwood Ave., Muncie, IN 47303	Ashland Ave., Linden St., Beechwood Ave., & Pauline Ave.	1.45	Special Use	City of Muncie	Dog park, benches, street parking	Good	Needs assessment
12. Gilbert Park	401 E. Gilbert St. Muncie, IN 47305	Gilbert & Elm Streets	0.3	Mini Park	City of Muncie	Picnic table, benches, playground, street parking	Medium to poor	Needs assessment
13. Guthrie Park	3011 W. University Ave., Muncie, IN 47304	University Ave., Riley Rd., North St., & Winthrop Rd.	2.19	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Open space, benches, street parking	Good	No facilities

14. Halteman Park	4205 N. Lancaster Dr., Muncie, IN 47304	Lancaster Dr.	3	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Tennis court, basketball court, volleyball poles, small playground, closed swimming pool, open space	Medium	Needs assessment
15. Heekin Park	1600 S. Hackley St., Muncie, IN 47302	Memorial Dr., Madison St., 9th St., Penn St., & Hackley St.	54.01	Large urban park	City of Muncie Parks and Recreation	Open space, cabins, dog park, picnic shelter, playgrounds, memorials, water fountain, basketball court, tennis courts, restrooms, water fountains, baseball diamond, horseshoe pits, park office, off-street and on-street parking	Medium	Needs assessment
16. I&M Park		Corner of Wysor and Wheeling	0.3	Mini-park	City of Muncie	Monument, benches, flagpole, crushed stone path leading to path over White River levee	Good	No facilities
17. Jack's Park	3000 N. Elm St., Muncie, IN 47303	Elm St. & Dunn Ave., south of McGalliard Rd.	2.11	Small Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Lighted basketball court, picnic table, playground equipment, street parking	Medium	Needs assessment
18. Kiljack Park		Kilgore and Jackson	0.6	Mini-park	City of Muncie	Landscaping, benches	Good	No facilities
19. Matthews Park	1513 W. Harvard Ave., Muncie, IN 47303	Harvard Ave. east of Wheeling Ave.	1.04	Small Neighborhood Park	No information available	Open space, trees, minimal access (no parking)	Good	No facilities

20. McCulloch Park	1200 Martin Luther King Blvd., Muncie, IN 47303	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd., McCulloch Blvd., Highland Ave., and Centennia l Ave.	91.43	Large urban park	City of Muncie	Sledding hill, playgrounds, disk golf course, basketball courts, baseball diamond, Soap Box Derby track, picnic shelters, picnic tables, lodge, memorial, "safety town", off street parking	Medium	Needs assessment
21. Morningside Park	2100 E. Cornell Ave., Muncie, IN, 47303	Cornell Ave.	0.89	Mini Park	City of Muncie Parks and Recreation	Basketball court, picnic shelter and tables, playground, grill, footbridge for neighborhood access, off street parking	Medium to poor	Needs assessment
22. Prairie Creek Park	7801 S. County Rd. 560 E., Selma, IN 47383	Windsor Rd., 575 E. - 544 E., 650 S., & 461 E. - 475 E.	1890.81	Regional Park	Indiana - American Water Co., Inc. & Hiatt, Brian & Charla	Boat launch, leasable piers, campground, bath house and beach access, restrooms, basketball court, model aircraft field, picnic shelters, picnic tables, playgrounds, rental lodge, horseshoes, volleyball court, disk golf, windsurfing access, dog-running area, bank fishing, ATV area, horseback riding trails, multi-use hiking trail, mountain bike trails, connection to	Playground equipment ranges from good to poor	New construction is ADA-accessible; overall Needs Assessment recommended

						Cardinal Greenway, Red-tail Conservancy Nature Preserve, park office, off-street parking		
23. Riverbend Park	320 N. High St., Muncie, IN 47305	High St. & Wysor St.	0.42	Mini Park	City of Muncie	Platform, sculpture, benches, landscaping and screening hedges	Good	No facilities
24. Riverview Park	700 N. Bunch Blvd., Muncie, IN 47303	Bunch Blvd & Carver Drive	3.45	Small Neighborhood Park	No information available	Open space, baseball diamond (not maintained), basketball court, benches, playground equipment, picnic shelter and table, off-street parking	Medium to poor	Needs assessment
25. Storer Park (PLANNED)	No specific address	W. Mansfield Road and N. Riley Rd	Not defined	Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Planned park	NA	Will comply with ADA guidelines when developed
26. Thomas Park	2001 S. Rochester Ave., Muncie, IN 47302	Rochester Ave., south of Memorial Drive	11.5	Large neighborhood park	City of Muncie	Baseball diamond, basketball court, tennis courts, playground equipment, picnic shelter and tables, openspace	Good to poor	Needs assessment
27. Tillpond Park (PLANNED)	No specific address	South Tillotson and Cornbread Road	10	Regional Park	City of Muncie	Planned park	NA	Will comply with ADA guidelines when developed

28. Tuhey Park	500 W. North St., Muncie, IN 47303	White River Blvd. & North St.	8.43	Neighborhood Park	City of Muncie	Picnic table, benches, playgrounds, swimming pool, splash pad, openspace, sculpture, open space, off-street and street parking	Good	Needs assessment
29. Washington Park	305 S. Pershing Dr., Muncie, IN 47303	Adams St., Pershing St., & Charles St.	0.78	Mini Park	City of Muncie	Playground equipment, elegant park furniture, open areas	Medium	Needs assessment
30. Westside Park	2400 W. White River Blvd., Muncie, IN 47303	White River Blvd., Tillotson Ave., & Nichols Ave.	20.65	Small Community Park	City of Muncie	Baseball diamond, basketball courts, open space, picnic shelters and tables, grills, playground equipment, shuffleboard court, three wire-control airplane circles, off-street parking	Good to poor	Needs assessment
31. White River Park	No specific address	White River Blvd., Nichols Ave. to High St.	41.6	Linear Park	City of Muncie & Delaware County	Linear park with White River Greenway, picnic shelters and tables, benches, off-street parking	Good	Greenway complies with ADA guidelines
TOTAL			2,174.95					

Source: 2014 City of Muncie Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Muncie Parks Department, and visual survey conducted January, 2021

Note: Total acreage includes 10 acres planned (and owned by City) for Tillpond Park.

7. ACCESSIBILITY

The designated ADA coordinator for the City of Muncie and the Parks and Recreation Department is:

Yvonne Thompson, Director of Human Rights
300 North High Street, Muncie 47305
Phone: 765-747-4854
Email: ythompson@cityofmuncie.com

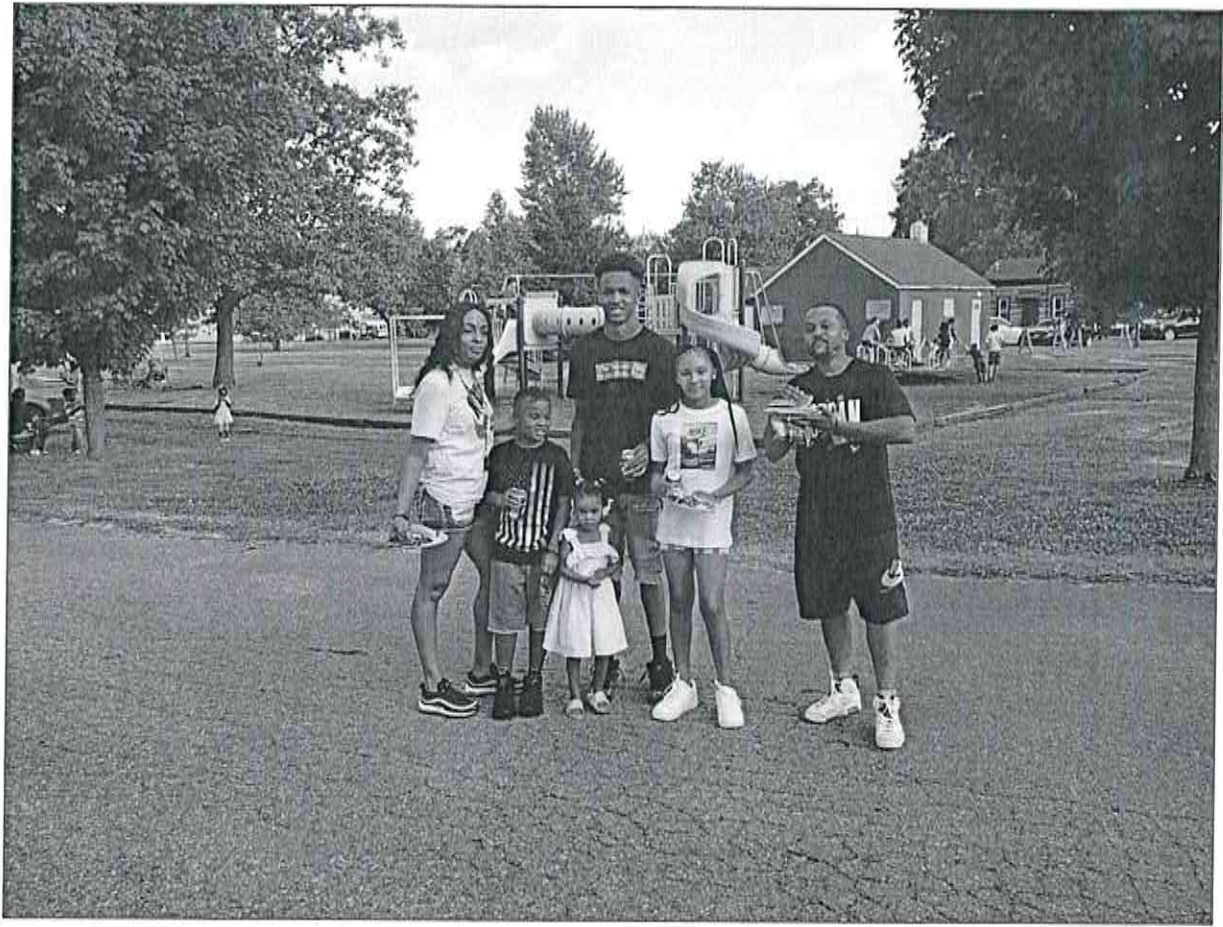
The City of Muncie has an American with Disabilities Act Transition and Implementation Plan.⁵ This plan has specific transition plans in place for Heekin, Westside, and McCullough parks and has been implementing recommendations from that plan. The City of Muncie is dedicated to continuing incremental improvements for accessibility at each of its parks. This includes accessible parking, paths, restrooms, activity areas, amenities and signage. The parks department recognizes from previous plans and inventories that much of the parks system has issues with accessibility. The new MPRD administration spent 2020 responding to immediate ADA issues. The focus was at Cooley Park. Lack of funding or formal assessment leads the current administration with a clean slate to evaluate and prioritize ADA compliance. Updating the 2011 transition plan to include all parks is a priority for the department.

The City has in place a resolution designating an ADA coordinator (Ms. Thompson) and a "Grievance Procedure" that provides a process for addressing complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits.

In addition, the City of Muncie has in place a process to post the required information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, the City of Muncie Grievance Procedure under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other ADA related information on the city's website and at other locations as may be determined from time to time.

A copy of a completed ADA/Rehab. Act (504)/ADA assurance of accessibility compliance sign-off sheet is included in the Appendix.

⁵ City of Muncie, Indiana Americans with Disabilities Act Transition and Implementation Plan, Muncie-Delaware Metropolitan Planning Commission, December 2011



8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

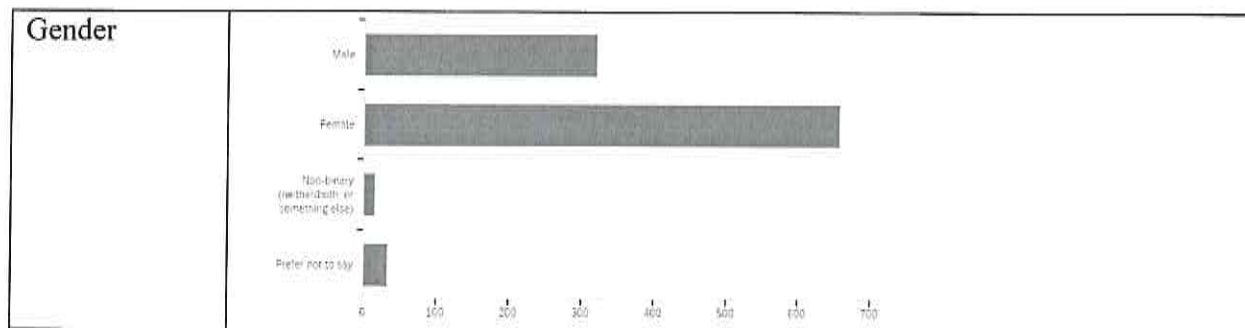
The public participation component of this plan has been limited due to the various restrictions on community gatherings due to COVID-19 but meets all DNR requirements for the master planning process. The following public process has been followed:

- Community internet random survey (December, 2020 – January, 2021)
- Publicly advertised parks boards meetings – March 16, 2021; April 1, 2021; April 13, 2021
- Stakeholder meetings (December 2020 through April 2021)
 - ✓ Healthy Community Alliance
 - ✓ Working meetings with Parks Staff and City and County departments
 - ✓ Working meetings with individual parks board members

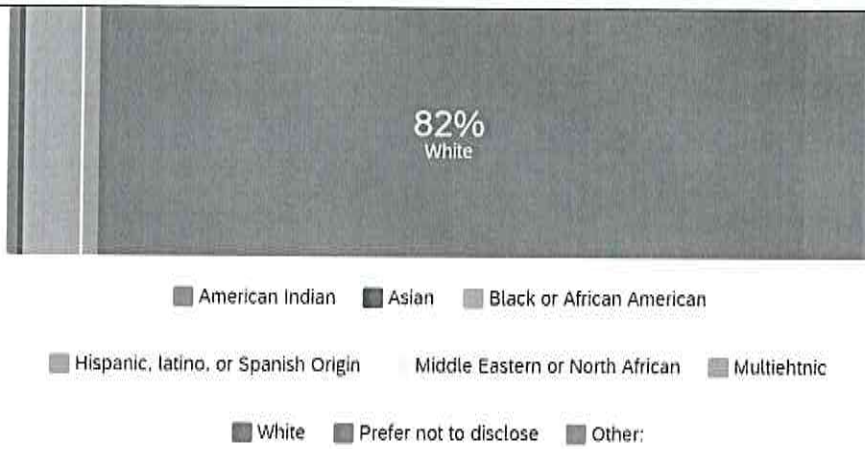
Public input for the Resident Satisfaction Survey was gathered during December, 2020 and January, 2021. The survey was conducted online and was advertised on the MPRD Facebook page and to the following groups: NAACP, YMCA members, Concerned Clergy, Ball State University's Community Engagement Facebook followers. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from individuals throughout Delaware County. The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 survey responses. A total of 1,056 responses was obtained. Statistically, a sample of 1,053 responses provides a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

The following slides show some of the key findings of the survey. The complete survey results can be obtained from the parks department staff.

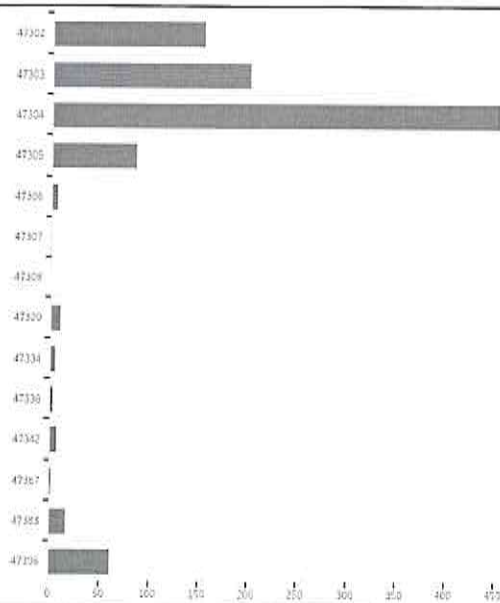
Demographics



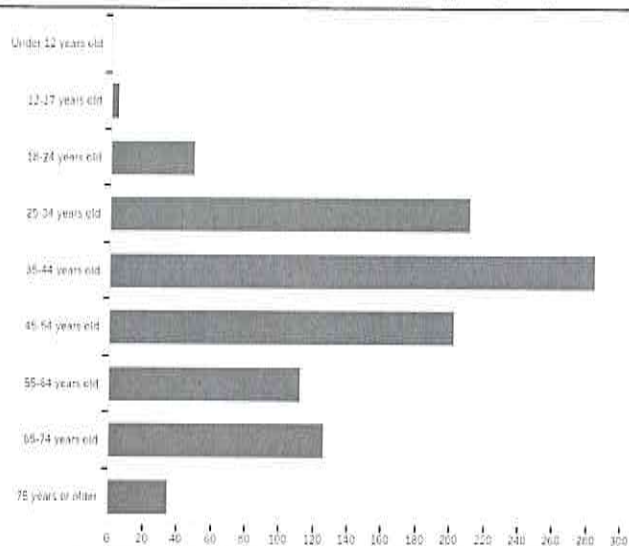
Race/ Ethnicity



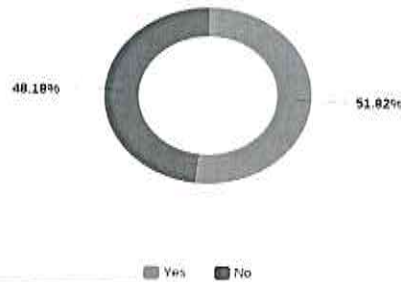
Zip Code



Age



Children living
in the home



Survey Questions	Responses
How important are parks, recreation services, and open space to the quality of life in Muncie?	83% Very Important 15% Important 2% Somewhat important
How familiar are you with the city's Parks and Recreation Department?	61% Slightly familiar 30% Very Familiar 10% Not familiar at all
How many times have you visited any of the city parks this past year?	15 or more visits 44% 5-15 visits 32% 1-5 visits 25%
How satisfied are you with the walking trails?	Somewhat satisfied 43% Satisfied 39% Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 15% Dissatisfied 4%
How satisfied are you with the playground facilities?	Somewhat satisfied 39% Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 27% Satisfied 20% Dissatisfied 4%
How satisfied are you with the picnic facilities?	Somewhat satisfied 38% Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 30% Dissatisfied 17% Satisfied 17%
How satisfied are you with the restroom facilities?	Dissatisfied 38% Neither satisfied or dissatisfied 34% Somewhat satisfied 22% Satisfied 6%
Would you like to see more wetlands, forests, farmlands and/or heritage sites?	Yes 82% No 18%
Would you like Muncie to adopt green	Yes 80%

infrastructure connecting our park system? (Green infrastructure could include trails, linear open spaces, or "green streets" - referring to streetscapes that include bike lanes, sidewalks, and green buffers?)	No opinion 16% No 4%
Did you participate in any outdoor recreation this past year? (i.e., gardening, outdoor games, walking)	Yes 93% No 7%
<p>What would you like to see more of in the Parks? Select all that apply.</p> <p>The highest rated were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Nature trails/boardwalks, 72%, 762 responses of 1,056 ✓ Music in the park, 62%, 655 responses ✓ Botanical gardens, 56%, 590 responses ✓ Spray parks/splash pads, 54%, 573 responses ✓ Outdoor play equipment/ADA accessible, 52%, 552 responses ✓ Accessible paved multi-purpose trails, 49%, 515 responses ✓ Additional recreational programming, 43%, 454 responses 	

Conclusions

Review of the responses to the questions includes a clear support for the trails network, that respondents use the parks, they don't have real strong feelings on the infrastructure except a negative response to the condition of bathrooms. There is also support for additional events and programming. In summary, parks are important, the trails network is great, and we use the parks.



9. NEEDS ANALYSIS

This section presents the methodology and results of the needs analysis task. Generally, per DNR guidelines, this section documents:

- Recreation behavior and need;
- Participation and user preference;
- Causes of nonuse or lack of public engagement; and,
- The needs of special populations.

The primary methodology used in this plan is an issues-based analysis (referred to as Issue Analysis). Other methodologies cited in the DNR guidelines are Level of Service (LOS) and Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). These were not chosen because on based on early collaboration with staff and board members, emphasis in the five-year period (2021 – 2025) would be more on programming and expanding recreational opportunities rather than development of new parks (although these are not discounted as the City is currently building new trails and is in the process of planning a new nature area along South Tillotson Avenue. How Muncie fares under the LOS methodology is discussed next.

Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

The 2014 parks master plan included analysis and maps of the status of Muncie relative to the standards proposed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). These Level of Service (LOS) Standards for Parks and Open Space is developed by the NRPA to “...guide communities to set local standards based on expressed public need, values, and expectations, and is expressed in acres/1000 to measure and prioritize needs.” In general, the 2014 parks master plan stated: “...Muncie’s park system only meets the “core” recommendations when including the leased properties.” The basic premise is that Prairie Creek puts Muncie over the threshold required for acreage per population, but the basic system of core parks in the city remains deficient. It is also stated in the plan that “...when assessing how many acres Muncie should provide of the various types of parks, all park types except the regional park type are deficient.” Muncie has been active in park development where the opportunity arises and the current administration has placed emphasis on parks as a critical component of the community. Three new parks are planned and defined in this plan.

Issue Analysis

The issue analysis evolved from discussions held throughout the planning process with members of the parks staff and board, a community survey (discussed in Section 8), and through community input including that derived from past parks plans (especially the 2014 plan) to ideas and concepts resulting from meetings with outside agencies. As a result of these discussions, the following issues consistently emerged:

- Issue 1: Additional recreational programming;
- Issue 2: Upgrade playground equipment with modern equipment, safety considerations, and accessibility considerations;
- Issue 3: Continue to upgrade Muncie's bike/ped system and make it truly multi-modal with enhanced public transportation linkages; and,
- Issue 4: Evaluate creating Prairie Creek Park as a stand-alone entity with its own funding stream and DNR master plan.

The following discussion briefly summarizes each issues and potential answers/next steps. This then will feed into the Priorities and Action Schedule defined in the next section. Figure X presents a New Facilities Location Map which shows currently contemplated facilities currently being developed or which may come in place in the next five years.

Issue 1: Additional Recreational Programming

Background

Parks department staff have indicated this is a priority. An important part of this effort is to increase efforts to improve health outcomes for the City of Muncie and Indiana as a whole. This has been confirmed through discussions with stakeholders. Recreational programming for all ages can help achieve this goal.

Possible Solutions/Next Steps

- The parks department is exploring a number of programming opportunities in the next few years, but perhaps the most visible will be working to reinstitute the Gus Macker summer basketball tournament.

Issue 2: Upgrade playground equipment with modern equipment, safety considerations, and accessibility considerations

Background

Many of the parks have outdated and non-ADA compliant playground equipment. The parks department has been working to address this situation and it will continue that effort.

Possible Solutions/Next Steps

- Include ADA renovations as required in all parks renovation projects and or new construction.
- Continue implementation of City's 2011 ADA transition plan and review information relative to existing parks and update as necessary.

- Multiple individual park renovation projects are underway or planned.

Issue 3: Continue to upgrade Muncie's bike/ped system and make it truly multi-modal with enhanced public transportation linkages

Background

Muncie has a visible trail network that includes paved bike trails, on-street bike markings, and signage relating to the various components of the network. This trail system, combined with the Ironman competitions held at Prairie Creek, is a great quality of community "identifier" that will help build Muncie as a great place to live.

Possible Solutions/Next Steps

- Continue coordination with Cardinal Greenway.
- Ensure that park renovation projects and new development plans consider multi-modal linkages.

Issue 4: Create an updated development plan for Prairie Creek Park that reflects its potential for the community as a regional and national attraction

Background

Prairie Creek Park is unique in its location (several miles southeast of the city in Perry Township) and its draw – the water. The park has a public beach and offers extensive boating and related outdoor opportunities. The park hosts a variety of athletic events and will be home to a national Ironman event in 2021, which is expected to draw thousands to the community.

Possible Solutions/Next Steps

- Update development plan for Prairie Creek Park



10. PRIORITIES AND ACTION SCHEDULE/NEW FACILITIES LOCATION MAP

The action program presented in this section details the focus of the parks department's efforts to achieve the city's goals for parks over the next five years in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of its park and recreation opportunities. Potential projects are shown on the priority action schedule for the five-year plan (Table 7). Each action item on the project list relates to one or more of the goals from the Goals and Objectives section of this plan.

The project list is not a fixed element nor is it exhaustive. The project list reflects the results of the input received from the Parks & Recreation Board, City staff and the online survey. Future circumstances, especially availability of funding, may influence the order in which the projects are completed.

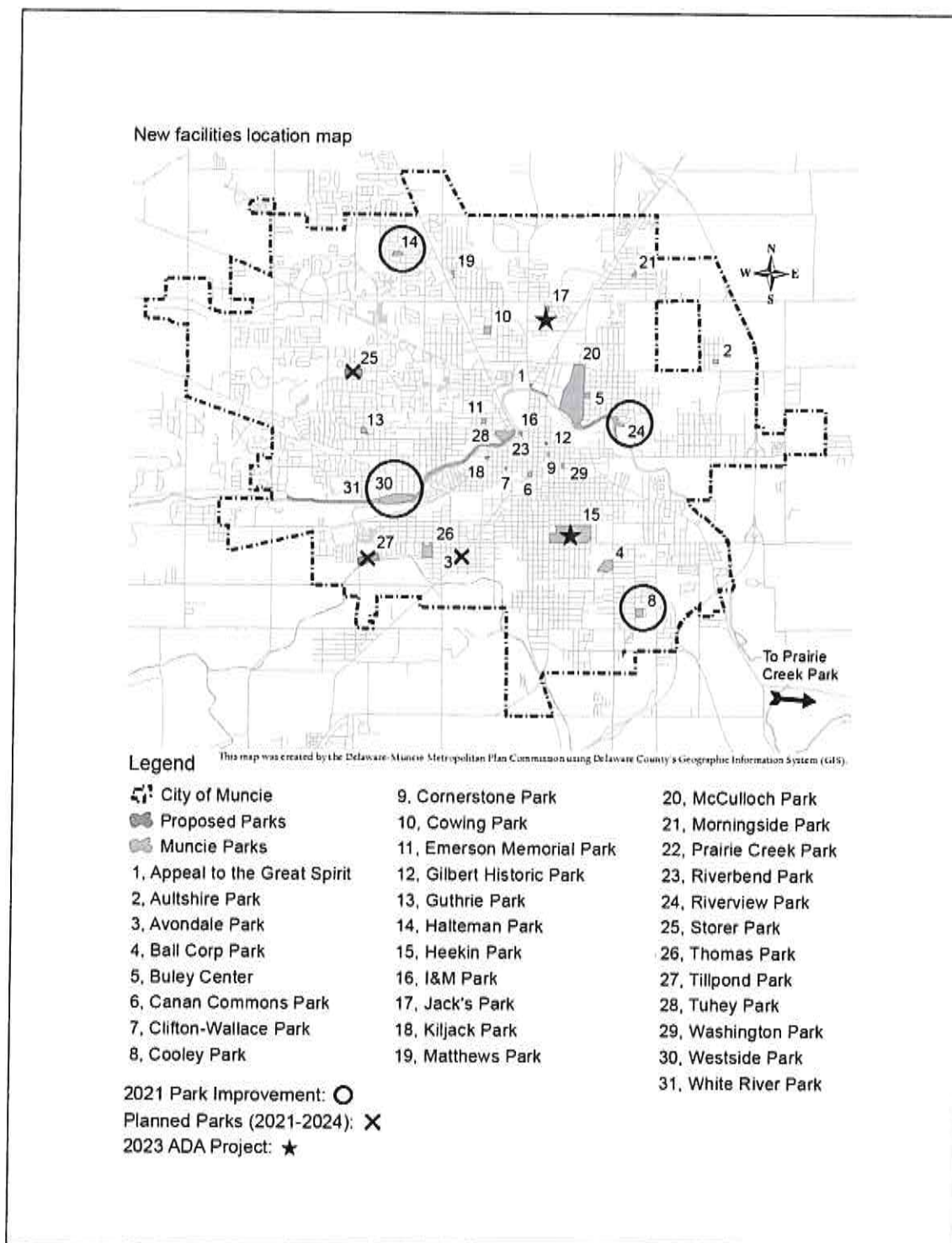
Table 7

5-Year Priority Action Schedule				
Year	Site	Action	Cost Estimate	Potential Source of Funds
2021	Various Locations and Parks	Summer Youth Mentor & Employment program to hire 200 teenagers, Install new ADA compliant playground equipment at Morningside Park and McCulloch Park	Cooley Park - (\$80,000), Halteman Park - (\$150,000), Riverview Park - (\$20,000), Park Trees - (\$10,000)	Operating Budget, EDIT Grant
2022	All Parks	Prepare development and ADA plans for each park in the system	Not defined	Staff time, operating budget, grants
2022	South Tillotson Nature Park**	Develop new park on city acreage on South Tillotson Street	Not defined	EDIT funds, grants
2022	Muncie Central High School Parking Lots, Various parks	Bring back the Gus Macker tournament, Renovation of Riverview Park, Cooley Park, and McCulloch Park (2021-2022), Install new ADA / playground equipment at Ball Corp. Park and Thomas Park, New practice shelters and	Riverview Park - (\$150,000), Westside Park - (\$100,000)	Sponsorships, EDIT Grant, Operating Budget

		football fields at Ball Corp Park (2021-2022)		
2023	Heekin and Aultshire Park**	Install new ADA compliant playground equipment Heekin and Aultshire Park	Southwest Park - (\$70,000)	Grants and Operating Budget
2024	Muncie Central High School Parking Lots, Thomas Park	Host Gus Macker tournament (2022-2024), Total renovation of Thomas Park (2023-2024)	*Gus Macker - (\$50,000 a year), Thomas Park - (\$1,000,000)	Sponsorships, IU Ball Memorial Foundation
2021 - 2025	Various Locations and Parks**	Remove 500 dangerous trees (2021-2025), Plant 1000 trees (2021-2025), Expansion of Community Health initiatives and youth sports programs (2021-2025), Summer Mentor & Employment program (2021-2025), Implementation of parks exercise equipment (2021-2025)	Trees Streets - (\$25,000), 4 Parks each receive new playground equipment per year - (\$170,000) (2021-2025)	Operating Budget, Grants
<i>*Note: Potential to make \$4,000,000 of economic impact for the city according to Gus Macker statistics</i>				
<i>**Potentially eligible for LWCF funding</i>				

Figure 2 presents graphically the locations of the projects identified above as well as couple of new projects (Riverside Trail, South Tillotson park development, Storer Park) that are being done or anticipated.

Figure 2
New Facilities Location Map





k.

APPENDIX

Public notices, sign-in sheets
ADA Assurance Form